

SDG Accord Report Toolkit

Introduction

Global universities, colleges and students have a leading role in the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Led by a Global Alliance of the world's university, college and student sustainability networks, the SDG Accord is a worldwide partnership – representing approximately 110 institutions, 103 support organisations and 817 individuals – all spread across 85 countries. Launched in September 2017, the Accord is a public declaration of an institution's commitment to sharing and reporting on their progress towards the SDGs – giving rich insight into the actions undertaken by higher and further education and their outcomes in our communities and the world at large. There are four different types of signatory: institution, individual, supporting organisation and students' organisation.

All signatories are encouraged to follow 5 principles:

- Align all major efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators, including through our education, research, leadership, operational and engagement activities;
- Aim to involve members from all key stakeholder groups in this endeavour, including students, academics, professional staff, local communities and other external stakeholders;
- Collaborate across cities, regions, countries and continents with other signatory institutions as part of a collective international response;
- Using their own unique ways, inform, share our learning and account to both local and global communities our progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Annually report a progress update to the UN High Level Political Forum (Institutions only).

The report we are launching today at the UN High Level Political Forum in New York is the result of the fifth principle. It provides insight into the global landscape of the SDGs in higher and further education, both institutions as a whole and students. It also shows how they are being supported by global organisations and networks.

This is the second report from the SDG Accord institutional signatories and the mandatory reporting process, and it shows much progress within the sector.

Details

Report title: [Progress towards the Global Goals in the University and College sector](#)

Date and time of launch: 3pm(EST) on Tuesday, 9th July 2019.

Web links:

https://www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/files/2019_the_sdg_accord_un_high_political_forum_final_online_version.pdf

Launch event: UN High Level Political Forum in New York

Social media handles and addresses:

Twitter

Handle - [@UN](#) and [@EAUC](#)

Hashtag - #SDGAccord

#HLPF

#GlobalGoals

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TheEAUC/>

LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/environmental-association-for-universities-and-colleges/>

Communications pack includes:

- 1) Press release
- 2) Newsletter text
- 3) Suggested tweet
- 4) Images

EAUC Press Release

Issue date: Tuesday, 9th July 2019

Climate Change protests force Universities and Colleges to rethink priorities

A new SDG report finds student Climate Change protests are pushing Climate Action up the agenda of universities and colleges across the world.

The second SDG Accord report, '[Progress towards the Global Goals in the University and College sector](#)', will be launched tomorrow (Wednesday, 10th July) at the United Nation's High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York by the Global Alliance – a partnership of the world's universities, colleges and sustainability networks. Progress reported by institutions on the SDGs this year has proven to be significant.

One standout change is prioritisation. While in the past 12 months institutions reported SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) as being the areas they had most impact on, there is a clear planned direction change over the course of the next 12 months. SDG 4 (Quality Education) remains of high importance, as can be expected in education institutions, but Climate Action (SDG 13) has overtaken it in terms of prioritisation.

Iain Patton, CEO, EAUC, said: *"We are already starting to see an increase in the drive from institutions to lower their carbon emissions as they seek to show the leadership and foresight expected of advanced education institutions. This increase in action is due to the publication of scientific research papers warning how imminently a climate catastrophe will occur, combined with pressure from students and academics as they participate in global Climate Strikes and other actions to force the issue up the agenda. The SDG Accord report makes several recommendations, one of which is that universities and colleges should sign the [Global Climate Emergency letter](#) and commit to Net Zero Carbon Emissions, or risk falling behind institutions that recognise the seriousness of this situation."*

This SDG Accord report is the accountability mechanism of the SDG Accord, a high profile international initiative developed to allow the tertiary education sector to demonstrate its commitment to the SDGs. It is presented annually to the United Nations. The SDG Accord has gained official commitment to its tenets from 110 institutions, 103 support organisations and 817 individuals – all spread across 85 countries. The report also makes key recommendations for the

United Nations, governments across the world, universities and colleges, students and support organisations.

Findings from the SDG Accord progress report:

- Over two thirds (70%) of respondent institutions had mapped their activities to the SDGs either partially or entirely. Furthermore, 62% of respondents report publicly on their SDG work - a 50% increase from 2018.
- The majority of institutions (71%) said that the SDGs were a strategic priority. This could be linked to the findings from 2018 that saw 71% of respondents state discussing the SDGs at an executive level was their next step for the following year. Anecdotally, many institutions said the SDG Accord has been a useful tool to open up discussion on the SDGs at a more senior level within their institution.
- Over the last 12 months, the SDGs that institutions outlined they had the biggest impact on were SDG 4 Quality Education, SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing, and SDG 5 Gender Equality. When asked what they would be prioritising over the next 12 months, 72% said SDG 13 Climate Action, 70% said SDG 4 Quality Education and 58% said SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing.
- At the other end of the spectrum, the SDGs that institutions felt they had least impact on in the last 12 months were SDG1 No Poverty, SDG2 Zero Hunger and SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation.
- The biggest challenges for institutions in integrating the SDGs holistically were 1) Lack of staff capacity, 2) Lack of funding, and 3) Limited understanding of the SDGs with the institution. These are the same top 3 as last year, and it is disappointing that more has not been done to alleviate these issues.

Iain continued: *“The results of this progress are incredibly encouraging. There has been a big increase year-on-year in tangible contribution to the SDGs in each university and college that has reported. These contributions are forward-thinking, engaging and innovative and we are excited to see them develop. But there is still much to do. Now that the SDGs are becoming embedded at a more senior level in institutions, we would like to see real progress on overcoming the barriers listed by institutions as problematic to the integration of the SDGs. In particular, there must be more training and support for staff on the SDGs to ensure they are equipped with the skills they require to push the agenda throughout their institution.”*

Sam Barratt, Chief, Education and Youth for UN Environment and Chair of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative, said: *“The take away from the survey of 110 institutions is that they are already embracing their role in educating and supporting this new generation of leaders. Every Friday we see this new consciousness rising, as young people demand action and call on governments, companies and institutions to move faster to address the climate emergency. The SDG Accord brings these institutions together, giving them a platform to share best practice and empowers them to be more aspirational on this agenda. The report shows that acting on climate change and education are the stand-out priorities, but positive action is being taken on all of the SDGs with real change taking place, just one year on since the last report.*

“As ever, there is always more to do and certainly the UN and partners in the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative will look at the recommendations outlined in this report which will inform our thinking for the months ahead. We look forward to seeing institutions tackle these global challenges with the fierce determination and smart innovation of which they are so capable, with our door wide open to help in any way that we can.”

The EAUC will be presenting the SDG Accord report on behalf of the Global Alliance at the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) event at the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Wednesday, 10th July.

ENDS

Notes to the Editor

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- 1) '[Progress towards the Global Goals in the University and College sector](#)' report, published 10th July 2019.
- 2) More information can be found on the SDG Accord website – www.sdgaccord.org
- 3) A guide is available for institutions that want to start to adapt and take action on the Climate Change agenda. It is titled 'Adapting universities and colleges to a changing climate: Making the case and taking action' and is [available here](#).

About the EAUC: EAUC is the alliance for sustainability leadership in education. EAUC represents over 200 institutions with a combined total of 2 million students and nearly 400,000 staff with a spending budget of over £25 billion. We help leaders, academics and professionals to drive sustainability to the heart of their post-16 education institutions. For more information, visit www.eauc.org.uk.

Newsletter copy

A global alliance of the world's universities, colleges and sustainability networks will tomorrow (Wednesday, 10th July) launch the second annual SDG report; '[Progress towards the Global Goals in the University and College sector](#)'. Presented at the UN High Level Political Forum in New York, the research shows increasing prioritisation of Climate Action (SDG 13) in universities and colleges and recommends their leaders commit to Net Zero Carbon Emissions or risk falling behind institutions that recognise the seriousness of this situation. This research was undertaken by the EAUC and you can find the report here and sign up to the SDG Accord here.

Suggested Tweets

NEW SDG Accord Report 2019: 'Progress towards the Global Goals in the University and College sector'. Presented to the @UN at the #HLPF tomorrow – It shows prioritisation of SDG 13 (Climate Action) and recommends institutions commit to Net Zero Carbon <https://bit.ly/30stbQ6>
Find out more about how further and higher education are contributing to the #SDGs in the new #SDGAccord report

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect a powerful global 'Call to Action'. Find out what higher and further education institutions are doing to contribute to the SDGs in the new #SDGAccord report <https://bit.ly/30stbQ6>

Images

The SDG Accord

The University and College Sector's Collective Response to the Global Goals

Facilitated by   Supported by  **HESI** HIGHER EDUCATION
SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

The SDG Accord

The University and College Sector's Collective Response to the Global Goals

Annual SDG Accord Report 2019

*Progress towards the Global Goals in
the University and College sector*

New York, July 2019

The United Nations High-level Political Forum

Led by the Global Alliance - a united group of university and college
sustainability networks