

The SDG Accord

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



Integration of SDGs in

- ☒ Institutional governance/strategic level
- ☐ SDGs in research
- ☐ SDGs in campus operations
- ☐ SDGs in curriculum development
- ☒ SDGs in student engagement activities
- ☐ SDGs into community activities
- ☐ SDGs at a whole-institution level

Focus on

- ☐ Goal 1 - No poverty
- ☐ Goal 2 - Zero hunger
- ☐ Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
- ☐ Goal 4 - Quality education
- ☐ Goal 5 - Gender equality
- ☐ Goal 6 - Clean water and sanitation
- ☐ Goal 7 - Affordable and clean energy
- ☐ Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth
- ☐ Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- ☐ Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
- ☐ Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities
- ☐ Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production
- ☒ Goal 13 - Climate action
- ☐ Goal 14 - Life below water
- ☐ Goal 15 - Life on land
- ☐ Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
- ☐ Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

SDG Accord Case Study

Summary:

The King's Climate Action Network (King's CAN) is an open, interdisciplinary forum for all staff and students at King's College London. It was founded in October 2020 with the aim to co-create our Climate and Sustainability Action Plan with staff and students, and bring together members of the King's community who want to take action on climate change.

Based on the Swedish Climate Framework for Higher Education Institutions, it covers 13 key impact areas, from energy consumption and business travel to education and community engagement. Within the King's CAN, seven thematic sub-groups address these areas by meeting regularly to discuss recommendations and projects. In its first year, the King's CAN focused on developing recommendations for the action plan, while in its second year, we encouraged students and staff to take part in actions supporting our wider plans, with the support of the sustainability team.

Engaging students and staff in our work towards Goal 13 – Climate Action was essential for us, as we wanted to create an action plan that met the ambition of our community, and represented King's students and staff. Less than two years later, the King's CAN has grown to more than 300 students and staff, and put forward over 40 recommendations for our Climate and Sustainability Action Plan. Students and staff have also started taking action, from presenting a plan to embed climate into the curriculum to senior leaders and developing a listening campaign, to running cycling events and creating a podcast. Through regular plenaries and additional events, for example during Sustainability Month, we have also shared the progress on climate action with the wider King's community.

Outline the 3 key benefits of integrating this theme:

- 1.** We have been able to bring together students and staff from across King's, and empower them to take action on climate.
- 2.** The broad scope of the King's CAN has enabled us to go beyond operations, and also include education and research in our plans.
- 3.** Support from senior leaders has enabled us to share progress and recommendations widely, engaging more students and staff.

Outline the barriers or challenges encountered in integrating this theme and how you overcame these:

- 1.** Covid-19 has meant activity had to take place online so far, which was challenging – but we aimed for regular meetings and updates to still make the King's CAN feel like a community.
- 2.** Students and staff may not always have capacity to commit to volunteering roles, so we made the commitment to the King's CAN very flexible, from only attending meetings or plenaries, to leading projects.

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3. The level of ambition required in climate action can seem challenging, so we carried out significant stakeholder consultation across the university once we finalised recommendations.

Conclusions and recommendations to others:

We found that embedding Goal 13 into our student engagement activities and strategic plans through the King's CAN has been a challenging but rewarding activity. Focusing on co-creation and stakeholder engagement helped us develop a Climate and Sustainability Action Plan that represents the King's community, and in the process we built a network of students and staff who are passionate about climate action.

Support from senior leaders has also been invaluable for this work, as it enabled us to share the project and our progress and recommendations widely across the university, and therefore encourage more students and staff to take part.

One challenge has been to keep students and staff engaged throughout the academic year, as priorities, for example during exam periods, can change. We aimed to mitigate this by making the King's CAN activities flexible, and would recommend that others developing a similar project set out the levels of commitment required for different activities at the start of the project. We also recommend considering whether additional training or development can be offered to those involved in projects, particularly in areas such as estates and carbon, as this can empower students and staff to engage.