



### **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 Centre for Sustainable Development Law and Policy (CSDLP) is a new research centre established by Professor Petra Minnerop at Durham University. The CSDLP's aim is to advance sustainable development and the SDGs through research across intersecting thematic areas; integrating SDGs in research, facilitated by the CSDLP, recognises and strengthens the crucial interplay of law and policy with science. The Centre seeks to extend and foster collaborative links with climate learners – that is, researchers, students, and civil society.

The CSDLP held a presentation on 'Collaboration in Research and Education' at the COP27 Climate Education Hub in Sharm-El Sheikh. The presentation was a collaboration between different institutions: the CSDLP at Durham University, the Centre for International Law at the National University Singapore (CIL NUS), and the CDP, a company specialising in environmental reporting in the private sector. The event attracted over 61,000 live views on various social media and online platforms. Rather than simply showcasing the achievements of the participating institutions and/or researchers, the presentation's focus was to demonstrate how partnerships among institutions (Goal 17) in research create a strong foundation to pursue the other SDGs through multidisciplinary research (Goals 1-17) and education (Goal 4). Furthermore, the presentation was not only an opportunity for horizontal knowledge-sharing between institutions, but encouraged vertical knowledge-sharing between researchers and students within Durham University. For example, I became involved in supporting Professor Minnerop in the preparatory work leading up to COP27. Engaging students in this way creates new, vertical partnerships within institutions, enabling inter-generational dialogue to share knowledge and best practices.

On that basis, and through regular meetings and events, the CSDLP continues to provide academics and students with a platform for meaningful interdisciplinary dialogue and network-building. The Centre's sustainability focus, as well as its close links with the University SDG Group, encourages SDGs to not simply be at the periphery of research, but rather that SDGs take centre-stage: how does our research contribute to, or highlight gaps in, pursuing the SDGs?

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### ***Outline the 3 key benefits of integrating this theme:***

**1.** Integrating the SDGs into research expands the platforms through which sustainability and sustainable development can be pursued and achieved. Having the CSDLP focus on facilitating collaboration and cooperation in integrating the SDGs in cross-cutting research areas complements and enhances the establishment of a greener and more SDG-conscious institution. Such a Centre further acts as a hub for researchers to explore novel ways in which their research and interests link to the SDGs – a process perhaps previously unexplored.

**2.** Having a research centre that actively seeks to integrate the SDGs into research that is produced by academics of the University, as well as research produced in collaboration with external institution, enhances the contributions that can be made to the UNFCCC system. In 2020, Durham University received observer status to the UNFCCC. Through integrating SDGs in research and education, the CSDLP and University can provide and submit research to the UNFCCC system that will hopefully aid in tackling the global issue of climate change.

**3.** Through presenting at COP27, we hoped to elucidate the importance of collaboration and cross-cutting cooperation to pursue the SDGs. Through a collaborative approach, the format of the presentation highlighted how different institutions can benefit from one another, by sharing best practices and knowledge, thus creating a strong foundation for further collaboration in pursuing the SDGs in research. Furthermore, the topic of the presentation enabled like-minded individuals to attend the talk (virtually or live) to learn from and engage through the Q&A and panel discussion with the theme of the importance of collaboration in research and education. Thus, pursuing SDGs in research has enabled Durham University and other institutions and individuals to contribute to, and engage in, meaningful dialogue and networking to promote collaboration and cooperation in research and education. Ultimately, this theme is beneficial not only in promoting greater sustainable-conscious research, but simultaneously encourages knowledge-sharing and the building of new relationships.

## *SDG Accord Case Study*

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

**1.** One of the challenges with any such project is to 'keep the ball rolling:' how do we, as an institution, ensure that the research we produce actively integrates the SDGs, whether that be through extending partnerships or being conscious of the link to climate change and action?

This challenge is, in my view, overcome through the continued work and development of the CSDLP. In the lead up to the COP27 event, the CSDLP signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the CIL NUS; such an MoU extends collaboration, fostering an environment conducive to sharing best practices on how to integrate SDGs into research. Additionally, the CSDLP actively involves students at all levels from different disciplines by offering research assistant positions, as well as hosting events that are open to all.

Integrating SDGs into research is an evolving and crucial task that requires continuous work and much effort. But through an active research centre – the CSDLP – that is composed of motivated individuals and change-makers, we hope to maintain and develop a platform that strives to integrate a variety of SDGs in multidisciplinary research within and outside of Durham University.

**2.** Another challenge in integrating SDGs into research is how to disseminate the importance of such task among a wide-range of academics and departments within the institution. The CSDLP is relatively new, and incorporating as many researchers as possible and emphasising the benefits of centring SDGs into research can be challenging.

To overcome this barrier, the CSDLP has been, and is continuing to be, active in creating awareness of the Centre and its work. For example, the CSDLP has an accessible and detailed section on the University website, where ongoing research, motivations and aims, as well as past and upcoming events are promoted. Additionally, through social media platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn to create awareness of ongoing events and accomplishments of researchers and members, we hope to encourage greater participation and engagement with the Centre to further integrate and pursue the SDGs in research.

**3.** A challenge for maximising the benefit of the COP27 presentation in integrating and promoting SDGs in research was to ensure that the main theme (collaboration in research and education) did not become lost or turn a subsidiary matter in the presentation. All the speakers are leading researchers in their field and have so many interesting aspects to discuss and present in their own area of research interests, that we had to ensure that focus remained on the importance of collaboration and how collaboration and knowledge-sharing is crucial in pursuing the SDGs in research.

In the lead-up to the presentation, there was much deliberation and communication in what the aim of presenting at COP27 was – i.e. collaboration in research and education – and through joint presentation slides, we were able to ensure that speakers linked their part back to the overarching theme, thus overcoming to a large extent the challenge encountered.

## *SDG Accord Case Study*

### ***Please outline your conclusions and recommendations to others:***

The CSDLP was privileged to benefit from the Climate Education Hub at COP27 to integrate and promote the SDGs in research, and we recognise that not every institution may have the opportunity to do the same. Integrating the SDGs in research is not, however, a one-off event that has been concluded by the CSDLP, but rather, the presentation was an invaluable opportunity to establish internal and external relationships that foster an environment conducive for horizontal and vertical knowledge sharing in future. Hosting events that facilitate communication and dialogue between various disciplines and actors allows for relationships and networks to be built that may previously not have been thought of. At the CSDLP launch event, for example, researchers from across the university were invited to speak about their research area and interests; through a 'lightning talk' format, researchers and academics were encouraged to foster interdisciplinary links and extend collaboration within and beyond their department.

Through internal events, much can be done to pursue and integrate the SDGs in research. Hosting collaborative and knowledge-building/sharing events are an effective and meaningful way to integrate the theme, especially for institutions wanting to start their journey to implement the SDGs in research.