

# The SDG Accord

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

## Sustainability Leadership Programme



### SDG focus

- ☒ Goal 1 - No poverty
- ☒ Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
- ☒ Goal 4 - Quality education
- ☒ Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals



Case study image depicts the University Project M.A.R.T.I.N and its outreach program for sustainable community

## What did you do?

School is where students are shaped into good citizens, contributing to both national development and global sustainability. Their education impacts their interactions and environmental treatment.

To achieve sustainability specifically the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG), the Virgen Milagrosa University Foundation, Inc. (VMUF) integrates sustainability into its teaching and learning curriculum. According to the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, education is essential for achieving sustainable development. Through education on sustainable development, learners will develop critical thinking skills that enable them to make informed judgments and choices that support a sustainable future.

In line with this goal, the Virgen Milagrosa University Foundation, Inc. has initiated Project **M.A.R.T.I.N.** Named after Dr. Martin P. Posadas, the late founder of the university, this project is designed to develop leaders across various professions who can contribute to national objectives, enhance heritage, and address contemporary issues in Philippine society while recognizing global influences. The university stresses professionalism and instills values such as self-reliance, integrity, creativity, moral sensitivity, discipline, critical thinking, truthfulness, and a commitment to service.

The **M.A.R.T.I.N.** framework was developed on the premises to engage the community through services provided by VMUF stakeholders, including administration, employees, students, and alumni. The project also involves collaboration with partners and organizations within and beyond the community to share resources and expertise, leverage funding opportunities, and broaden

the community impact. The framework is based on the principles of Appraisal of Needs, Aid in Execution, Assessment, and Assure Sustainability. It aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) identified through the SDG Value Scan, which was adopted from the Employers Confederation of the Philippines.

The University's *Priority Goals* are SDG 3 (Good Health and Well Being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education), followed by SDG 17 (Partnership for *the Goals*) as the Stellar Goal. Other goals *include* SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), SDG 9 (Industry Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) as Secondary Goals. Finally, the University's Future Goals are SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

Project **M.A.R.T.I.N.** encompasses several areas: **M**edical and Health Services; **A**rts, Culture and Religion; **R**esearch; **T**echnology and Innovation; **I**nformation and Education; and **N**atural Resources and Environment. VMUF positions itself at the forefront of community development, aiming to play a central role in individual social transformation by fostering change and sustainable development in identified communities. With the learnings of the students about sustainability, they were able to address and respond to the needs of people from various sectors of society.

Aligning with this project **M.A.R.T.I.N.**, every year the university conducts an outreach program where the different colleges participate and contribute to the sustainability of the community, the adopted community in particular.

### **What did we do?**

Embedding sustainability into the learning and teaching processes at the university is a core objective to achieve the learning outcomes of all programs offered. In addition to various modes of delivery, students engage in diverse activities designed to develop their skills, acquire knowledge, and become individuals who can think critically when making decisions in challenging roles. The university is committed to the realization of the UN SDGs, specifically SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 4 (Quality education), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals), by aligning these objectives with each learning activity. Through various initiatives, the university has established Project MARTIN, recognized as a catalyst for change due to the active participation and contributions of all stakeholders towards achieving its goals. This project serves as an avenue for learners to apply their acquired knowledge and values from discussions and activities to benefit the community.

### **What were the benefits and outcomes?**

1. Increased sustainability awareness among students regarding SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 3 (Good health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality education), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).
2. By integrating sustainability and the UN SDGs into the learning and teaching process, students acquired practical skills related to their learnings. They will be able to engage socially and manage the environment appropriately.

3. Integrating sustainability and the UN SDGs into the learning and teaching process impacted students' appreciation of activities promoting zero poverty, good health and well-being, quality education, and collaboration.

### **What barriers or challenges did you encounter in embedding sustainability?**

1. There is a quite resistance among students to engage in discussions about sustainability during the learning and teaching process, due to barriers such as language difficulties and anti-social behavior. To mitigate these issues, we encourage students to participate in group discussions and activities that are essential for completing their tasks.
2. Despite the integration of sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into then teaching and learning, some students have yet to recognize the importance of their contributions towards making meaningful changes in their personal lives, social interactions, and environmental impact.
3. Embedding sustainability in the curriculum proves challenging when learning activities are required to be conducted outside of the university classroom, due to the protocols associated with securing student waivers.

### **What are your conclusions and recommendations?**

Embedding sustainability, specifically the UN SDGs, into the learning and teaching process across all courses from various university programs provides a comprehensive understanding of the importance of sustainability in making decisions that lead to significant actions. Therefore, it is advised that sustainability be incorporated into the curriculum to help students understand how their decisions and actions can affect the environment, community, and relationships.