GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE

25–26 June 2020
Partnerships for Sustainability
In Higher Education

Global Partnership Conference online
University of Sussex
June 25, 2020

Joseph Alcamo
Sussex Sustainability Research Programme
The promise of the Sustainable Development Goals

✓ Agreed upon by 193 countries in 2015
✓ Comprehensive global goals - social, economic, environmental
✓ Target year: 2030    Ten years to go!
The promise of the Sustainable Development Goals

Some not so good news
- Missing target for eliminating extreme poverty
- Hunger increasing
- Inequality within countries remains
- Rapid global warming, species extinction

Some good news
- Child mortality sinking
- 2x marine protected areas
- Increasing safe sanitation

Missing 2030 target to virtually eliminate extreme poverty?
Sustainability takes a hit from the pandemic

Potential impact of Coronavirus Pandemic and Economic Recession on SDGs:

- Global GDP 2020: 5-8% ↓ (WB, June 2020 forecast)
- Tens of millions more → extreme poverty
- Countries look inward …
- Reduced foreign trade, foreign aid budgets
- But … people accustomed to … crash in oil demand; calmer transportation; cleaner air; lower GHG emissions
- More open to change? “Build back better?”
Pandemic poses threat, brings scarcity
Now …
Stronger resilience against threat
& higher efficiency to cope with scarcity

Partnerships to achieve the SDGs:
✓ Increase resilience because strengthen capacity
✓ Increase efficiency by sharing resources for same task
The 3 pillars of partnerships for sustainability

Three ways for universities to work together to advance sustainability and the SDGs:

- Teaching
- Policy/Advocacy
- Research

Participants, 2019 Expert Workshop on Science for Implementing the SDGs, Uni Ghana & Uni Sussex
Pillar 1: Cooperate on teaching

**SDG awareness** (2019) “somewhat or very familiar”: 52% China, 32% Mexico, S Africa 27%, 17% Germany, 13% UK; 1 out of 4 globally; (WEF, 2019)

**Universities - Centers for raising awareness about the SDGs**

**What? Integrate SDG curricula**
- Aim: Inform and inspire students across all courses & programmes
- Co-develop courses (or elements) to explain SDGs & embed in existing programmes; online learning

**What? SDG Training - Policymakers & Stakeholders**
- Aim: Inform & inspire key policymakers & stakeholders
- Co-develop short, intensive courses (online?) - Key information on SDG implementation; share experience
Pillar 2: Cooperate on policy/advocacy

Universities should advocate and exemplify sustainability

What? Build green campuses & share how to do it

- **Aim:** University as example of sustainability; the Zero Carbon University
- Renewable energy; recycling/reuse; procurement; low carbon travel policies

- Engage students: e.g. “Living Lab”- campus as testing ground for student projects/dissertations; Innovation competitions
- Universities share experience & work together: Joint working groups of universities; Co-sponsor conference; share experience of Sustainability Officers …
Pillar 2: Cooperate on policy/advocacy

What? Joint advocacy for sustainability

- Aim: Universities play active role in society as advocate of sustainability
  - Local: e.g. Environmental justice & SDGs
  - National: e.g. National policies to advance SDGs
  - International: e.g. Advancing SDG agenda at UN

- What universities can do together: Campaigns, events, policy briefs, webinars, …
Universities should develop the knowledge needed for the SDGs

Sustainability research
Aim: Advance research to support the SDGs
Non-traditional, new kind of research:
- Solution-oriented
- Impact-oriented
- Interdisciplinary
- Transdisciplinary – Carried out with local partners and other stakeholders
Pillar 3: Cooperate on sustainability research …

Examples of sustainability research – Sussex as partner

**New Guinea**

Combined conservation and public health to slow deforestation and help achieve SDGs 1, 3, 15

Ecologists & public health specialists

Stakeholders: Communities in Wanang forest conservation area

Impacts: joint conservation – public health programmes

**Kenya & South India**

People-centered early warning to achieve SDGs 2 & 13

Climatologists & anthropologists & behavioural scientists

Stakeholders: farmers, fishers, meteorological services, Kerala & Central Kenya

Impacts: Improved early warning systems
Pillar 3: Cooperate on sustainability research …

What universities can do together …

- Joint work on methodologies for sustainability research & promote sustainability research amongst faculties
- Joint research programmes to support priority SDGs and pandemic-related research …
  - How can global goals be made more resilient to shocks? [e.g. robust food systems (SDG 2), more robust health systems (SDG 3)]
  - How can we use resources more efficiently to achieve SDGs? [Integrated approach to SDGs, actions that help achieve multiple SDGs]
Summing up – The 3 pillars of partnerships for sustainability

How should universities and HE advance sustainability and the SDGs?

**Universities …**

… should be centers for raising awareness about the SDGs

… should advocate and exemplify sustainability

… should develop the knowledge needed for the SDGs
Summing up – The 3 pillars of partnerships for sustainability

Three ways for universities to work together to advance sustainability & SDGs

Teaching
- Bring SDGs into curricula
- Provide SDG training - policymakers/stakeholders

Policy/Advocacy
- Build green campuses & share knowledge
- Advocate together

Research
- Collaborate on methodologies
- Work together to do research needed to achieve the SDGs, and build resilience and efficiency
Partnerships for Sustainability
In Higher Education

Global Partnership Conference online
University of Sussex
June 25, 2020

Joseph Alcamo
Sussex Sustainability Research Programme
Thank you!