Mainstreaming Education for SDGs

Peer support group session 3, 13 August 2024

How do we make a compelling case for mainstreaming SDG 4.7?

PUBLIC SUMMARY

Mainstreaming Education for the SDGs

ACTS   SDSN
Australia, New Zealand & Pacific

About this group

Group aims

- To mobilise and accelerate our tertiary education institutions' efforts to provide all learners with the knowledge, skills and mindsets to promote sustainable development (SDG 4.7)
- In particular, to contribute to a roadmap for mainstreaming SDG 4.7 in HEIs

Group principles

- Participatory - Sharing our expertise and experiences
- Build on our diversity - everyone has something useful to contribute
- Safe space (Chatham House)
- Try to distill and capture recommendations for HEIs in our region

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Intro to Session 3

How do we mobilise institutional leadership (and others) to mainstream education for the SDGs/sustainability to all students?

1. What arguments/reasons could we use to convince others that mainstreaming education for SDGs is essential for our institutions and that it should be a priority?

2. What are the pathways to influence? Who needs to be convinced and how do we get to them? What can we do if we don't have direct access to influencing university leadership?

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Arguments/reasons for mainstreaming (1)

*   **Students need and want these knowledge and skills:**

    *   Industry / employers need and want students who have these skills.

    *   Demand for those skills is already increasing and only likely to increase as societal demand for action increases.

    *   Many students want to have ethical careers and to contribute positively to society.

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Arguments/reasons for mainstreaming (2)

- **It will help the institution stay on the front foot, mitigate risks and harness opportunities in light of changing societal expectations:**
  - Changing government expectations around student outcomes (University Accord).
  - Growing societal interest and expectation (social license) that higher education will deliver on societal benefit and sustainability; growing concern about green-washing.
  - Employer demand for green skills is already growing; sustainability is increasingly being incorporated into professional accreditation standards across professions.
  - Increasing competition from more agile professional education providers.
  - Sustainability education is increasingly being incorporated in university rankings.
  - An institution-wide approach is more efficient and effective than just relying on sporadic bottom-up approach.

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Arguments/reasons for mainstreaming (3)

- **Moral argument: the challenges the world faces cannot be solved (or will take much longer to be solved) unless the higher education sector plays its part:**
  - We need everyone on board in order to address global challenges and achieve the SDGs.
  - As the major providers of professional education, higher education institutions are uniquely placed – in terms of function, breadth and scale – to ensure our workforce and citizens can address the significant societal challenges we currently face.
  - Higher education institutions have a responsibility to ensure all students receive education for the SDGs as good global citizens.

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Pathways to influence (1)

- **Build a network of influence:**
  - There are a range of stakeholders that need to be brought on board: VCs, DVC, central administration leaders, deans, deputy-deans, department heads, colleagues, students.
  - Any one of those, in turn, help put forward the case.
  - Start by building support within your personal network, and expand the circle of influence from there.
  - Find and connect champions.
  - Multiple nudges from multiple people are usually more effective than one big push.

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Pathways to influence (2)

- **Other strategies for bolstering the case:**
  - Demonstrate value and what's possible by showcasing success stories (including through external recognition, such as awards) to internal stakeholders.
  - Link to processes that are already happening, such as re-accreditation and curriculum redesign.
  - An institutional commitment in one place (such as a university strategy, related graduate attribute, or signed commitment/pledge) can be used as a starting point to call for broader implementation.
  - Explicitly acknowledge and try to address likely concerns and perceived risks (e.g., crowded curriculum).
  - Use reporting/benchmarking to keep track of commitments.

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Next session

We hope you will be able to join us for the next session in the series:

- Tue, 8 October 2024 – **Mainstreaming education for the SDGs: Addressing some hot topics!**

- New participants from ACTS/SDSN AusNZPac member institutions are very welcome and can sign up here: ap-unsdsn.org/sdsn-acts-mainstreaming-education-for-sdgs-group-2024-session/.

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