

UNAI MEMBER ACTIVITY REPORT 2016/2017

Western Sydney University

Australia

During the 2016/2017 reporting period, Western Sydney University undertook a number of activities that underscore its commitment to UNAI and its principles. The following examples stand out as particularly noteworthy:

Activities and projects the Western Sydney University has undertaken in the past year addressing some of the ten UNAI principles:

Western Sydney University's UNAI Activity Report focusses on our work in 2017 in advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs). In early 2017 Western Sydney University became a member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Australia/Pacific and a University signatory to the SDSN Australia/Pacific University Commitment. The University also hosts the secretariat of the United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development Greater Western Sydney (UNU RCE GWS) a multi stakeholder network committed to delivering and operationalising the SDGs at a local level. Specific initiatives and activities to highlight include:



United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development – Curriculum Partnership

In August 2017 Western Sydney University approved a United Nations University Education for Sustainable Development proposal under the 21st Century Curriculum Renewal initiative. Under this proposal will offer a prestigious co-credentialed multi-disciplinary series of learning opportunities recognised and co-badged with the United Nations University RCE for all undergraduate students to undertake. A “Sustainability Bootcamp” as either an in class or extra curricula activity will introduce ESD, the Anthropocene and the SDG framework through a Social

Disclaimer: This activity report has been submitted by Western Sydney University and does not necessarily reflect the views of or represent an endorsement by the United Nations Academic Impact.

Ecology pedagogy – worldviews, systems awareness and future thinking. A cross disciplinary sub-major with a social action component will enable successful students to also graduate with a UNU RCE Global Citizenship Award. This work is being developed with a cross school academic working group and is scheduled for implementation in the latter half of 2018.

The Academy and the SDSN Youth - Western Sydney
The Academy is the University's program for high achieving students and offers a wide range of academic, professional and personal skills that prepare students for graduate success. One of these offerings is The Academy Citizen Scholar Award (ACSA) which is designed to be a framework for the development of Citizen Scholars – students who not only value gaining knowledge and are lifelong learners, but are critical thinkers, problem solvers and active, engaged citizens. Under this award, students get recognition for their work with the SDSN Youth – Western Sydney which is linked explicitly to the SDGs. In Innovation Lab (a unit in The Academy's Bachelor of Applied Leadership and Critical Thinking) students are introduced to the SDGs and develop a team project based upon one or more of the SDGs as they relate to issues in Greater Western Sydney. In August 2017, 31 students from The Academy, along with other emerging world leaders from 78 countries, attended the 8th University Scholars Leadership Symposium at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok. As part of the Symposium, a day of service was held engaging with the SDGs through practical action.

Office of International, School of Science and Health and Project Everest
In 2017 Project Everest, an organisation dedicated to developing sustainable solutions by designing and developing lean social enterprises, was approved by the Office of International as a new outbound mobility partner. Project Everest operates on the frontline of international development and their mobility programs are focused on building sustainable communities across Agricultural and Food Security, Environmental Sustainability Initiatives and Health specifically linked to the SDGs. In 2017/18 study tours are being offered to students through the School of Science and Health to Cambodia, Fiji, Timor-Leste and the Philippines.

Academic research that is currently undertaken at Western Sydney University which could help in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals:

The Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) Unit have developed research theme champions for four key themes: environmental sustainability, education and aspirational change, health and wellbeing and urban living and society. The Environmental Sustainability (SDG 13, 14, 15) achievements to date include research theme storms, research workshops, a

Disclaimer: This activity report has been submitted by Western Sydney University and does not necessarily reflect the views of or represent an endorsement by the United Nations Academic Impact.

tender for \$72,000 to Transport NSW to develop green tracks for the new light rail in Parramatta (Western Sydney). The Education and Aspirational Change (SDG 4) theme has seed funded four projects to date and secured external funding from UbyKotex for 'Development and Piloting of a menstrual health literacy program for women aged under 25.' (SDG 4,5).

Institute of Culture and Society

The State of the World's Children report is UNICEF's flagship publication and in 2017, focused on digital media. Institute of Culture and Society researchers ran a project with UNICEF to work with nearly 500 children in 26 countries to understand how they experience digital media and this data was included in snapshot form in the report: ICS also produced Young and Online: Children's Perspectives on Life in the Digital World: A State of the World's Children Companion Report. This work was featured on Radio National's Life Matters to generate support for a General Comment on children and digital practice to guide interpretation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to the SDGs.

School of Social Sciences and Psychology

The School of Social Sciences and Psychology has been developing Global Health Metrics to monitor progress towards achieving SDGs. Four of their papers have recently been published in the Lancet including: "Measuring progress and projecting attainment on the basis of past trends of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals in 188 countries: an analysis from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016".

School of Computing, Engineering and Mathematics

A large-scale project "Smart Management of Disinfectant in Chlorinated Water Supplies" related to drinking water treatment and transportation through pipes, funded by an ARC Linkage Grant which directly addresses water related global goals. In respect of SDGs 1 (No Poverty) and 2 (Zero Hunger) the School has been leading a research team comprising members from University of California, University of Salerno, University of Colombo and Macquarie University with the aim of transforming agriculture via a Digital Knowledge Ecosystem for Agribusiness (smart farming). The problem identified is that uncoordinated production of crops leads to large waste, un-met demand and farmers getting trapped in a poverty cycle. This project is conducted with farmers in Sri Lanka and India.

School of Science and Health

MyWell: An app for monitoring groundwater levels, rainfall, water quality and checkdam water levels at the Village level in India.

Since 2012, the Managing Groundwater Use and Sustaining Aquifer Recharge through Village-

Disclaimer: This activity report has been submitted by Western Sydney University and does not necessarily reflect the views of or represent an endorsement by the United Nations Academic Impact.

level Interventions (MARVI) Project Team has worked in India to develop a village level approach, models and tools to assist in improving groundwater supplies in partnership with farmers and effected stakeholders. Recently the team developed the MyWell App. MyWell is a Smartphone and SMS App for collecting and analysing data related depths to well water level, rainfall amounts, checking dam water levels and water quality parameters, developed by MARVI, led by Professor Basant Maheshwari, School of Science and Health. The App works by crowdsourcing data from MARVI project's network of volunteers. MyWell displays the current status of the groundwater level in each well, together rainfall amounts, checks dam water levels and water quality parameter values with historical and village level data for simple comparison and analysis. The MyWell App allows farmers to see the trends in groundwater levels, rainfall and check dam water level on monthly, three monthly and yearly basis for available historical data for their individual wells, for the entire village and for the entire PIN code. The visualisation of the trends in collected data and further analysis can help farmers to compare different years for groundwater availability and plan for the next Rabi crop. In the next phase, MyWell will be scaled from 10 to 100 villages, and onto several orders of larger magnitude. This means making improvements to the features that make up the self-managed MyWell network. (SDG 3,12 and 16)

Some issues facing the city/country/region where Western Sydney University is located :

Future of Work

Western Sydney is Australia's fastest growing labour market, yet the region has a chronic shortage of local jobs: Western Sydney workers outnumber the regions jobs by 150,000. By 2036 – at present growth rates – the region faces a job deficit of 210,000. The region has rising levels of tertiary education, with the number of degreed workers residing in Western Sydney increasing by around 10,000 each year, most of whom commute to the Sydney Central Business District (CBD). Western Sydney's major job deficit is in the professional and business services sectors as workers in these sectors are the main long distance commuters to the Sydney CBD. Jobs in health, personal services and education and training are growing in response to population growth and while a high proportion of these services jobs involve workers with higher education and training like teaching and nursing professions, many workers are employed in lowly paid, unskilled jobs. (SDG, 8,9)

Disclaimer: This activity report has been submitted by Western Sydney University and does not necessarily reflect the views of or represent an endorsement by the United Nations Academic Impact.

Education

Changing social, cultural and economic conditions, globally and regionally, demand significant changes to all levels of Australia's education system. It is likely that young people in Western Sydney today will emerge to a lifetime of work that will be more varied than the one for which they were prepared. But the education solutions demanded by future workplaces are unlikely to be realised by any single type of education provider. The varied nature of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions determining the capabilities required to thrive in the future make a unilateral approach impossible. Universities like all other entities in the education space – need to collaborate with industry, community and other providers at all levels to deliver the complex capabilities required. One of the challenges for universities and the communities they serve is to grow more genuine curriculum partnerships that exemplify deep engagement and reciprocity. (SDG 4,8)

Infrastructure and Transport

It is projected by 2036, Western Sydney will be home to over three million people. More people visiting, living and working in Western Sydney presents opportunities and challenges for transport and infrastructure stakeholders. Population increases and higher residential densities put pressure on existing transport networks and infrastructure. The environmental conditions often associated with construction works (such as noise, vibration, dust, light and air pollution) can have negative impacts on those living nearby. Rapid change also has implications for the quality of life and wellbeing of Western Sydney's residents. Navigating an increasingly dense and networked city requires constant adaptation. Strategic planning initiatives and policies that shape smarter transport and urban infrastructure need to ensure that Western Sydney becomes a productive, viable and sustainable place to live, work, play and stay. (SDG 9, 11,12)

Health and Wellbeing

Western Sydney is a culturally and linguistically diverse region: it is a major point of settlement for refugees, as well as home to the largest Aboriginal community in Australia. This necessitates culturally-appropriate health-care services. The region also has a high proportion of low income families, which has correlation to poor health and is compounded by poor access to and provision of health services. Rising healthcare costs, alongside structural workforce issues relation to recruited a skilled workforce, and increasing expectations from the community for timely, safe and respectful services, make addressing these key health priorities more difficult. (SDG 1,2,3,10)

Disclaimer: This activity report has been submitted by Western Sydney University and does not necessarily reflect the views of or represent an endorsement by the United Nations Academic Impact.

Three suggestions on how UNAI can better support Western Sydney University:

- Suggestion one: Creating and brokering opportunities for educational partnerships to co-design, co-develop, co-deliver and co-credential new.
- Suggestion two: Opportunities for research collaborations with other institutions and UNAI.
- Suggestion three: Opportunities for learning exchanges for academic development.

Links:

Western Sydney Matters: https://youtu.be/Th4S2yp_9iw

VC SDG Interview: <https://youtu.be/mGFeHkzBvzA>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/RCE_GWS?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/westernsydneyu>