



HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

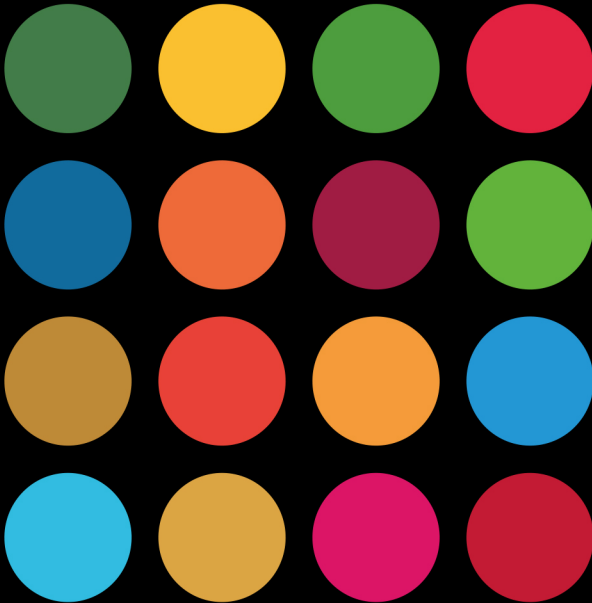


WENDY PURCELL  
SERIES EDITOR

# HIGHER EDUCATION AND SDG17



## PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



EDITED BY

ÁNGEL CABRERA AND DREW CUTRIGHT

# HIGHER EDUCATION AND SDG17

# HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## Series Editor

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## About the Series

*Higher Education and the Sustainable Development Goals* is a series of 17 books that address each of the SDGs in turn specifically through the lens of higher education. Adopting a solutions-based approach, each book focuses on how higher education is advancing delivery of sustainable development and the United Nations global goals.

## Forthcoming Volumes

*SDG16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions* edited by Sarah E. Mendelson

Higher Education and the Sustainable Development Goals

# HIGHER EDUCATION AND SDG17

Partnerships for the Goals

EDITED BY

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*To Tom Lovejoy, scientist, teacher, change maker, and friend.*

# PRAISE FOR *HIGHER EDUCATION* AND *SDG17*

“This is a timely book, which will provide concrete support to the debate on SDG17 and on the actions the higher education community should take in order to pursue its implementation.”

**Walter Leal**, Professor of Environment and Technology, Manchester Metropolitan University, Series Editor of *Concise Guides to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* (Emerald)

“As a book series, *Higher Education and the SDGs* will make an important contribution to accelerating delivery against the global goals. To start the series with the book on Partnerships for the Goals makes perfect sense and is highly symbolic since accomplishing the sixteen other ones largely depends on cooperation and collaboration among all relevant stakeholders. This book impressively shows the important role of higher education in teaming up with actors from various other sectors to meet the ambitious aims of the Agenda 2030 collectively.”

**Prof. Andreas Kaplan**, ESCP Business School, Sorbonne Alliance

“The book series *Higher Education and the SDGs* will make a valuable contribution to policy dialogue and higher education practices in achieving the SDGs. This first book in the series on Higher Education for Partnerships for the Goals highlights a range of partnerships, discusses some successful partnership cases and explores ways to enhance the impact of higher education partnerships to accelerate progress towards SDGs.”

**Qudsia Kalsoom**, University of Dundee, UK.

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# HESDG17 SERIES

## EDITOR – PREFACE

Professor Wendy M. Purcell, PhD FRSA

Higher education (HE) is making an important contribution to delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through high quality teaching and learning, HE supports the development of responsible citizens as scholars, leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals. Universities and colleges undertake socially impactful research to help find solutions for the world's most pressing issues. They are also active in civic and community settings as anchor institutions. Nevertheless, given the fierce urgency of (un)sustainable development, the climate crisis and widening inequity within countries and across the globe, HE needs to do more and go faster. For HE to deliver fully against the SDGs, it needs to adapt to this shared global agenda for transformative change.

This book series focuses on the role of HE in advancing the SDGs, identifying some successes to date and opportunities ahead. In sharing the ways and means universities and colleges across the world are engaging with the SDGs, the series seeks to both inspire and enable those in the HE sector and stakeholders beyond to channel their efforts towards solutions for the grand challenges represented by the global goals. Insights gleaned from relevant case studies, innovations, reflective accounts, and student stories can help the HE sector both deepen and accelerate its engagement with the SDGs. Each book seeks to capture ways HE is fulfilling its contribution to delivery of the goal at hand and its underlying targets. Illustrating the work of students, that undertaken by faculty and staff of the institution and conducted with others, positions HE as a change agent operating at a systems level to help to create a world that leaves no one behind.

Taking up this global challenge, SDG17 'Partnerships for the Goals' is a call for radical collaboration of HE with local, national,

and international actors. HE is well-suited to partnership working with those in health, business, and community settings. Bringing key assets of curiosity and the pursuit of truth to partners seeking solutions and driving innovation, universities and colleges operate in global knowledge networks. Helping realize human potential connects the worlds of learning and work and entrepreneurship in support of inclusive economic growth. As place-makers, HE institutions can use their convening power to draw stakeholders around a problem in support of the adaptive change needed to tackle the challenges of sustainable development.

This book on HE and SDG17 acknowledges the relative ease with which universities and colleges network with one another across the world, share their research findings, and support the aspirations of talented students and faculty. Academic freedom includes the opportunity to work without borders *within* the academy. However, working *beyond* HE with local and global stakeholders calls for new models of learning, research, leadership, and governance essential to the pursuit of the SDGs. The longer time horizons HE works across together with the regular refresh of its student body enables universities and colleges to withstand short-term political and business cycles. As such, HE can support the development of trustful relationship building necessary to support effective partnership working. The need for HE to deliver on its academic mission and share knowledge and learning, within the classroom and through the academic literature, demands transparency of purpose and outcomes in collaborative ventures. Together with shared place-based agenda for health of people, planet, and shared prosperity, HE can be both an effective partner and a vehicle for partnership. For example, climate action in cities brings a HE institution into relationship with civic and community leaders, with businesses and healthcare providers. So too, in communities transitioning from old world industries to the new world of the green economy, universities and colleges are central to the partnerships effecting a just transition.

This book is clear that without the full participation of HE, delivery of the SDGs will be materially compromised. But to sustain the current level of activity and pursue the deeper engagement

needed, HE itself needs to tackle the actual and perceived barriers to more fulsome and complex models of collaboration. From acknowledging the work involved in creating and sustaining a partnership in staff workload models and faculty portfolios for tenure, to more easily deploying students into community settings to work on social projects and crediting their work, HE needs to change its quantum of activity in this space. Indeed, as this book acknowledges, HE needs to reach out to all those who can benefit from what it offers and do so in a way that engages the public. Moving from an ivory tower model of a university or college to one that represents an institution connected to those it serves calls for more innovation in partnership models, recognizing many of those developed to date reinforce inequity and models of colonialism.

As noted in this book, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated change within HE and advanced partnerships across the academy globally. Marshalling the intellectual, physical, and human assets of universities and colleges was central to vaccine development and healthcare delivery programs in community settings. As such, an important legacy of the pandemic is the new partnership assets developed within HE and relationship capital that can now be deployed to progress the SDGs with a renewed sense of urgency. From global classrooms to new public-private partnerships, this book shows that HE has the wherewithal to make a deeper and wider contribution to the goals and to do so at a pace demanded by the scale of the sustainable development challenges now and ahead. This relies on explicit strategic intention by HE institutions and being invitational to students, faculty, staff, and those in the wider stakeholder ecosystem.

This book highlights the enormous untapped potential for HE to create partnerships for the goals and in doing so advance the frontiers of knowledge that in turn drive up institutional reach and reputation. Immersive engagement with the SDGs can catalyze pedagogic innovation, serve to refresh curricula, and stimulate new program development. It can also open new avenues for research, attract new sources of funding, and energize people to deliver on the academic mission. Developing the next generation and creating the technology and insights to tackle the issues of social justice in our

communities, social impact work is the business of HE. It is clear that HE needs to be a full partner in partnerships for the goals – the task ahead is for HE to realize this mission. In adopting the SDGs, the academy can help create the conditions within and beyond the institution to deliver on the betterment of all humankind.



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First and foremost, a monumental thank you to the authors in this book, for taking the time to share their insights with the broader higher education community and, most importantly, for their courageous leadership in steering our universities towards greater impact.

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To our colleagues and friends at Georgia Tech – some of the most supportive, creative, and kindest colleagues we have known. And to our colleagues and friends in the University Global Coalition, who inspire us daily and encourage us to keep doing what we can to build a more inclusive and sustainable world.

Ángel thanks the many colleagues who have helped shape his thinking and inspired his actions, especially Prof. Tom Lovejoy, who passed away in 2021 after a long, productive and inspiring life committed to using science to build a better world. Drew thanks her mom Carol, sister Kyle, partner Daniel, and the friends she is lucky enough to consider family.