Third Symposium on Sustainability Science: Towards Guidelines on Research and Education

UNESCO Headquarters - Room XIII (Bonvin Building)

31 May - 1 June 2017
PANEL 1: Key Principles of Sustainability Science

- Links with 2030 Agenda – through the lenses of diversity of knowledge. Focusing more on the processes, rather than the targets.
- Co-design, co-production, co-implementation. Approach that links with SuS.
- SuS is not only about research. It is also about practices and relations.
CBM Infographic on SDGs and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Regional Sciences Bureau for Asia and the Pacific - UNESCO Office, Jakarta
Sustainable Development Goals

The logical flow

ENABLERS

- Life resources
  - The absolute needs
- Condition number 1 for development
- Global issues
- Issues to be solved

169 proposed targets
304 proposed indicators

SDGs Logical Flow, Prof. Kamarulazizi Ibrahim (USM, Malaysia)
PANEL 1: Key Principles of Sustainability Science

- Sustainability results from inter-dependencies between societal, economic, environmental and cultural drivers, and imply contradictions and dilemmas, not only technical problems to solve.

- SuS is about knowledge, technology, innovation and convergent understanding of global and local challenges.
PANEL 1: Key Principles of Sustainability Science

• SuS can be disciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary, but it is user-driven, and user-inspired building from integrated knowledge and territories-based integrated experiences.
• SuS specifically addresses dependencies and complexities, engaging scientists and practitioners, involving knowledge, attitudes, values, life forms and narratives, based on the diversity of cultures.
• UNESCO programmes, including academic chairs and category 2 centers, are a major tool to foster SuS, engaging sciences, humanities and society.
Challenges and opportunities:
1. Broadening appreciation for complementary evidence (Problem → questions → type of evidence → evaluation criteria)
2. Critical view and historical understanding to development
3. System thinking with political ecology perspective
PANEL 1: Key Principles of Sustainability Science

Plenary discussion and proposals from Member States

• Knowledge is not enough – we have to convince people why SuS is important.
• The need for awareness-raising.
• How can developing countries take ownership of SDGs and SuS?
• Need to pay due attention to the issues of gender equality.
PANEL 1: Key Principles of Sustainability Science

UNESCO’s Role

• Trans-disciplinarity – research and policy nexus
• Values/normative criteria – addressing the central characteristic of SuS – value pluralism.
• Methodologies of resolving deeply entrenched and complex (wicked) problems
• UNESCO’s programmes that add value:
  • MAB
  • MOST (Schools, IPL)
PANEL 2: Strategic Funding for Sustainability Science in Research and Education

• Scarcity of public funding – Competitive Frameworks, Crowdfunding.

• Need for finding trade-offs in particular situations.

• Various challenges (institutional, time-frames) for funding sustainability science research. Funders do not usually like transdisciplinary projects.
PANEL 2: Strategic Funding for Sustainability Science in Research and Education

- SDGs – not easy to find integrated agenda.
- 2030 Agenda and SDGs provide framework for moving forward at the global level. They cannot be addressed piece-meal, in a fragmented way. Implementation of the SDG will require flexibility and diversity: research landscape, funding structure, and knowledge platforms.
- The need for greater integration and transformation from silo based research to trans-disciplinarity. Research community for many years been organized into Silos, and will continue to be so.
PANEL 2: Strategic Funding for Sustainability Science in Research and Education

Lessons learned:

• Importance of “Glue money”
• Fundraising and research activity is synergetic.
• Sustainability science helps us avoid fragmentation in the implementation of the SDGs.
• How to approach funders – Framing the issues
• Limitations of funding (sometimes money is not the most important factor for impact)
PANEL 3: Mainstreaming Sustainability Science in Higher Education

National Perspective on ESD at Universities

Key stakeholders/beneficiaries for the Guidelines:

• Higher Education Institutions
• Individuals Researchers and Teachers
• Governments
• Society and Community

*University as a protected space.
ESD and Higher Education: UNESCO’s role

- ESD Literacy should be essential for all professionals; SD should be established as a central academic and organization focus (whole-institution approach)


- Question of expanding the scope of ESD in the guidelines. Action on other levels of education (other then high education – early childhood education onwards)
North-South Cooperation issues

Currently, cooperation is lacking. In the future, this is set to improve due to:

- Growth of scientific enterprise in the South
- Increasingly global scope of economic, environmental and social problems
- The growing role of internet and e-based learning
- Untapped potential for South-South cooperation
Thank you!