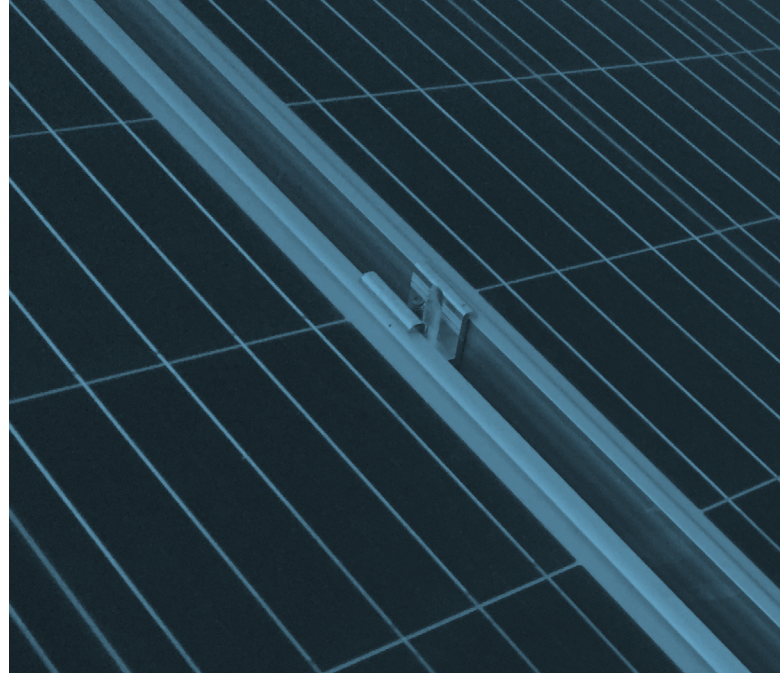
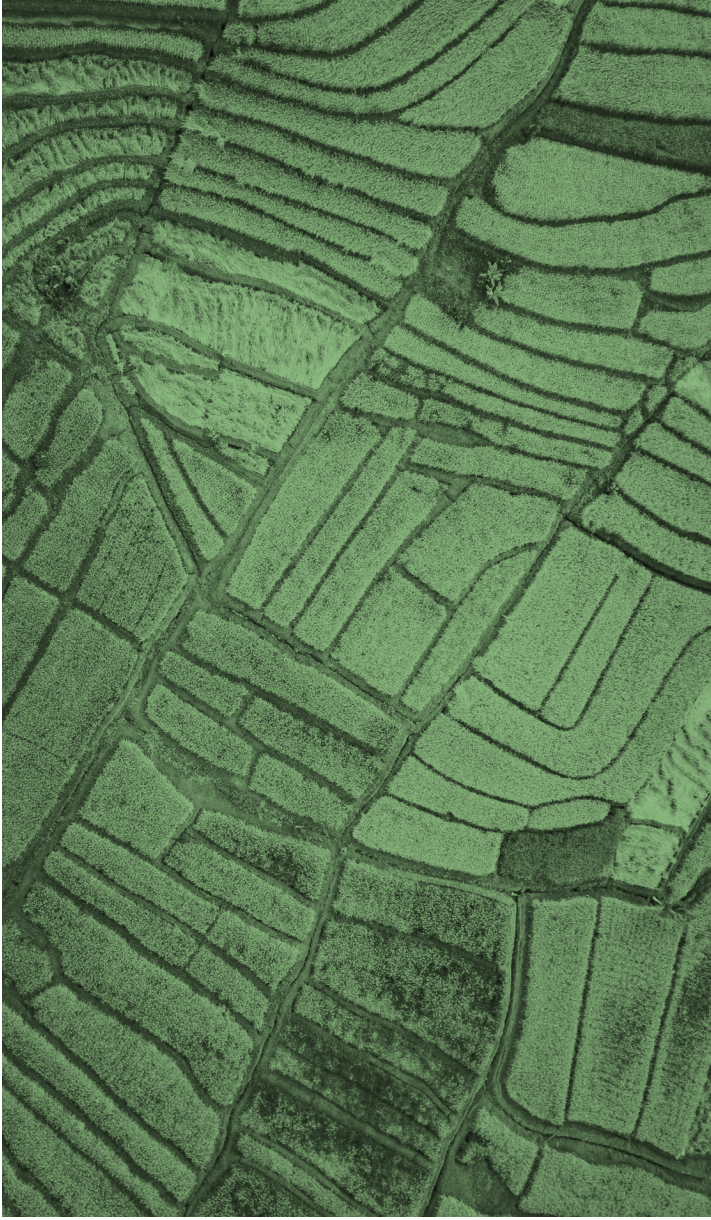


---

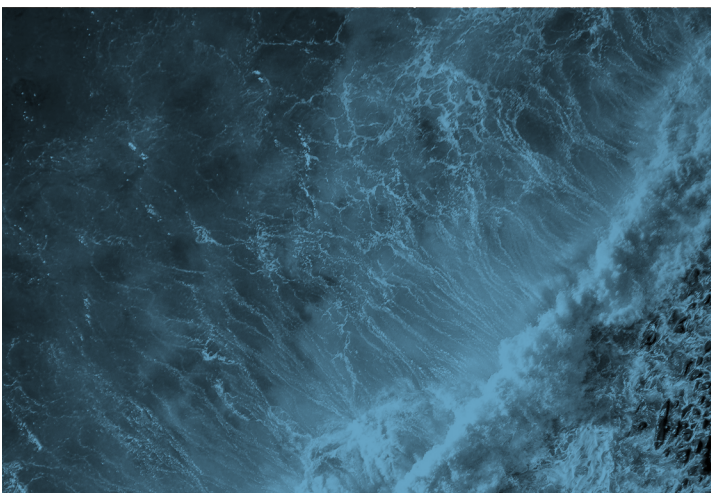
# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

---

HIGHLIGHTS AND OUTLOOK




**SDG**academy



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from our President	5
Letter from our Director	7
Advancing Education for a Sustainable & Inclusive World	8
Our New Courses	10
Our Faculty	11
Our Learners on edX	12
Our Reach	13
Course Enrollments	14
Measuring Success	15
Investment in Learning	17
The SDG Academy Library	18
New Initiatives to Support Education During COVID-19	20
Book Club with Jeffrey Sachs	21
Online Master's Programs	22
Mission 4.7	23
Community of Practice	24
Partnerships	25
Events	26
Engaging our Alumni	28
The Master's in Development Practice Program	29
Future Direction & Outlook	30
Our Team	32
Our Academic Advisory Committee	33
Get Involved	34



”  
**Universal education for sustainable development is within reach. Yet we must recognize the many barriers that still prevent billions of people from accessing digital services. We need urgent and large-scale multi-stakeholder efforts to remove such barriers to make it possible for anyone, anywhere, to learn.**

**Jeffrey D. Sachs  
President, SDSN**

# LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I'm delighted to present the SDG Academy Annual Report 2021 and to share with you the excitement and commitment of the SDG Academy as we advance our mission to promote education for sustainable development (Target 4.7) for all learners in all parts of the world. Education is the most vital key to sustainable development.

The SDG Academy is prioritizing multi-stakeholder partnerships to advance education for sustainable development. The educational opportunities presented by increasing digital connectivity and the increasing access to information are vast. Universal education for sustainable development is within reach. Yet we must recognize the many barriers that still prevent billions of people from accessing digital services. We need urgent and large-scale multi-stakeholder efforts to remove such barriers to make it possible for anyone, anywhere, to learn.

I am deeply encouraged by the continued rapid development of the SDG Academy's programs and partnerships. I am especially gratified by our expanding work with universities around the world to offer new, cutting-edge online courses; by the efforts of the Global Schools program to bring education for sustainable development to primary and secondary schools; and by our wonderful partnerships with UNESCO, the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, the Holy See, and other inspiring world-leading institutions committed to quality education for all.

Since the start of the pandemic, hundreds of millions of students have faced serious disruptions to their education. This has forced educators and learners in many contexts to shift to remote online teaching and learning. The SDG Academy was able to support

this rapidly expanding global community of online learners and educators with its open and free online educational resources, as well as with new online community building and engagement opportunities.

As the President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and a faculty member of many SDG Academy courses, it is my deep honor to witness and participate in the rapid growth of the SDG Academy. I look forward to further progress in realizing the SDG Academy's mission, and I heartily commend the SDG Academy team for their wonderful efforts.

The SDG Academy is deeply grateful for and inspired by the moral leadership and generous support of Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah and the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation. We give deep thanks to the remarkable worldwide faculty and partners. We are also deeply thankful for our learners worldwide, who demonstrate their dedication and commitment to a just and sustainable world for all.



**JEFFREY D. SACHS**  
PRESIDENT, SDSN





”

We all owe our utmost gratitude to you, our learners. You have sought out our courses, shared your stories of impact, and reinforced our belief that education is the first step towards changing the world. I hope you continue with us on this journey towards building a sustainable future for all.

Chandrika Bahadur  
Director, SDG Academy

## LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

I am delighted to bring to you the second edition of the SDG Academy Annual Report. In this report, you will read about our work over the past year and see the range and depth of the activities of the SDG Academy. Our effort to support our global audience of learners and educators continues during these unprecedented times.

Three threads run through our work this year. First, while we continue to focus on content, creation, and curation, we recognize that impact at scale takes collaboration. Three of our new courses were created and launched through partnerships, including our single most popular course, Nature-based Solutions for Disaster and Climate Resilience, presented in partnership with our friends at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Partnership for Environmental Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR). We made tremendous strides towards our core mandate of reaching a large global audience of learners, with a cumulative 641,070 course enrollments since inception, across a variety of platforms and formats.

Second, pandemic-related closures continued through this year, making remote teaching and learning even more important. While the SDG Academy's robust catalog of content is well placed to support remote teaching and learning, we aimed to identify new ways in which we could do more. We renewed our efforts to connect people online through our Community of Practice, live webinars, real-time engagement in courses, and new formats such as our brand-new Book Club with Jeffrey Sachs. We branched into podcasts for the first time and filmed our courses remotely, making it possible to expand the breadth and reach of our faculty. With the intention of making these resources easily available, we joined the Open Educational Resources (OER) community through a new and exciting partnership with Creative Commons. This will place our content in the public domain in a more prominent and effective way, taking away barriers to access. You will find these two themes consistently throughout this year's Report: open and remote learning. We believe these two approaches are key to democratizing learning and making it accessible and meaningful to our global cohort of learners.

Third, we worked to expand our physical presence to improve our global reach. As of July 2021, we have a new office of the SDG Academy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,

at Sunway University. We are tremendously excited about expanding our footprint into Asia and hope that our presence in the region will help us hear new voices and perspectives. We are also excited for a new partnership with UNESCO, Columbia University, and the Ban Ki-Moon Centre for Global Citizens to launch Mission 4.7, an ambitious plan aimed at promoting education for sustainable development at all levels of learning.

In this ever evolving and expanding body of work, we are grateful for our many supporters. We derive our inspiration from the President of SDSN, Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs, who pushes us to imagine new and exciting ways of fulfilling our mission. We are so grateful to our Academic Advisory Committee that guides our work with encouragement and attention, and to our partners for their unwavering support. In particular, the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation has been a strong and constant partner in our journey, and I am delighted to report that we have renewed our partnership with the Foundation for another five years. I am so grateful to my colleagues at the SDG Academy — a truly remarkable group of professionals. The success of the Academy this year is entirely due to their tireless efforts.

Finally, we all owe our utmost gratitude to you, our learners. You have sought out our courses, shared your stories of impact, and reinforced our belief that education is the first step towards changing the world. I hope you continue with us on this journey towards building a sustainable future for all.



**CHANDRIKA BAHADUR**  
DIRECTOR, SDG ACADEMY

# ADVANCING EDUCATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE & INCLUSIVE WORLD

The [SDG Academy](#) is the flagship education initiative of the [Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\)](#). The SDG Academy creates and curates online learning content on sustainable development, making it available at scale, for free, as a global public good and providing opportunities for peer learning and partnership.

Our initiative serves a diverse global audience with our self-paced massive open online courses (MOOCs) and multimedia resources crafted into a global online curriculum in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the [2030 Agenda](#). We engage with the SDSN's community of 1500+ universities around the world, as well as individual learners. Our learners include students and young professionals, researchers, policymakers, organizations, and other changemakers interested in expanding their

knowledge and connecting with like-minded practitioners who want to take an active role in addressing the world's most pressing social, economic, and environmental issues. To amplify our impact, the SDG Academy adopted a [Creative Commons](#) license last year, sending a clear message that learners and educators can feel confident using and sharing our educational resources to continue our goal of providing everyone access to high-quality educational content on sustainable development.



## ■ Our Vision

A world in which the Sustainable Development Goals are achieved through the efforts of the current and next generation of educators, practitioners, and citizens.



## ■ Our Mission

To create and curate relevant educational content on the SDGs and nurture a global community to prepare this generation and the next to achieve sustainable development.







**The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) was established in 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General to mobilize global academic and scientific expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development, including the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement.**

## OUR NEW COURSES

In the past year, we added three new massive open online courses (MOOCs) to our repertoire. [Click here](#) to view all 36 courses. These courses were all made possible through the work of our dedicated educational content provider partners around the world. They will re-launch or continue through the next year — learn more by engaging with the interactive content below!



MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE  
GEF IW:LEARN  
**GOVERNANCE FOR TRANSBOUNDARY FRESHWATER SECURITY**  
SIGN UP!

**[Governance for Transboundary Freshwater Security](#)**

Launch Date: August 31, 2020



Global Water Partnership



Learn to invest in Nature-based Solutions for a safer tomorrow!

**[Nature-based Solutions for Disaster and Climate Resilience](#)**

Launch Date: January 22, 2021




PEDRR  
Ecosystems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation

UN  
environment programme



Getting a Good Deal  
Negotiating Extractive Industry Contracts

**[Getting a Good Deal: Negotiating Extractive Industry Contracts](#)**

Launch Date: May 20, 2021





Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment  
A JOINT CENTER OF COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL AND THE EARTH INSTITUTE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

CONNEX  
Support Unit

Natural Resource Governance Institute

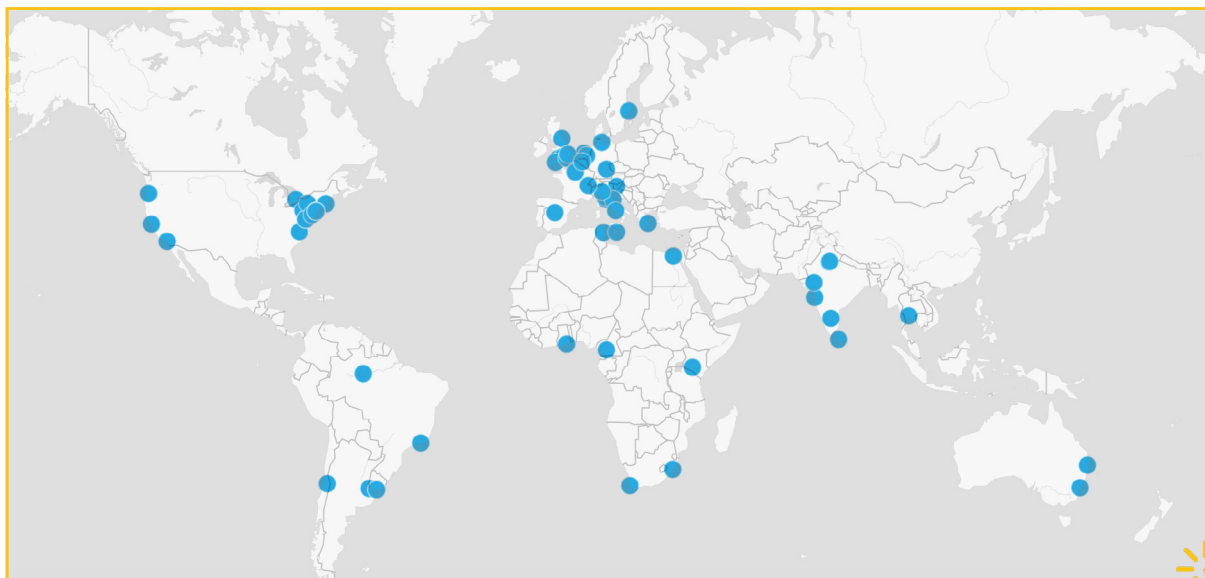


In the context of increasing demand for online learning opportunities, our partnership with CCSI Columbia and SDG Academy led to an innovative Mini MOOC on contract negotiation that allows learners to understand the challenges governments face in negotiating strong contracts. With the support of SDG Academy we were able to design a course that is relevant for multiple stakeholders in different regions of the world which will be a great complement to our in-person or live online training.

**Margarita Batlle, PhD**  
Senior Research, Data & Learning Officer, Natural Resource Governance Institute

# OUR FACULTY

Our faculty are academics, practitioners, and other experts in sustainable development without whom our courses wouldn't be possible. [Click here to view a full list](#) of our 250 faculty members.



Mikhail Fernandes, Communications and Eco-DRR Knowledge Network Consultant at United Nations Environment Programme, "Nature-based Solutions for Disaster and Climate Resilience" course faculty.



Roberto Mangabeira Unger, Political Philosopher and Roscoe Pound Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, "Freedom Now" video series faculty.



Angela Renata Cordeiro Ortigara, Associate Project Officer at UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), "Water: Addressing the Global Crisis" course faculty.



Makada Henry-Nickie, Robert and Virginia Hartley Fellow, Governance Studies at Brookings Institution, "Understanding Poverty and Inequality" course faculty.

# OUR LEARNERS ON edX

## We moved to edX in September 2018

Statistics from July 2020 - June 2021

Our courses  
on edX are



# 100%

self-paced

Active and archived  
courses now total

# 86



unique course runs



# 85%

Of our courses have  
verified enrollment  
levels above the  
edX average

## Profile of our Community

### Geographic Spread

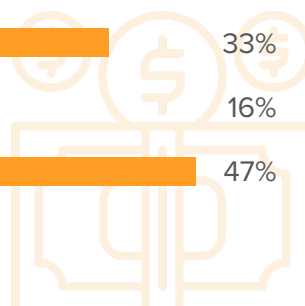
Antarctic	0.01%
East Asia & Pacific	12.70%
Europe & Central Asia	10.09%
Latin America & the Caribbean	10.09%
Middle East & North Africa	4.58%
North America	16.80%
South Asia	19.27%

### Top Country of Origin

1. United States
2. India
3. Great Britain
4. Nigeria
5. Brazil
6. South Africa
7. Germany
8. Spain
9. Canada
10. Italy
11. Mexico
12. France
13. Australia
14. Indonesia
15. Colombia
16. Turkey
17. Netherlands
18. Pakistan
19. Philippines
20. Kenya

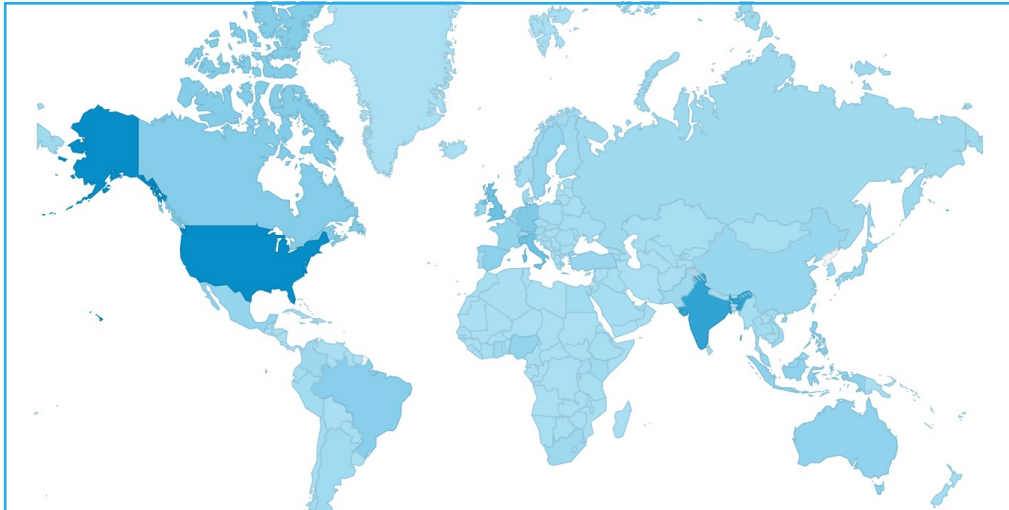
### Income Classification

Low Income	3%
Lower-Middle Income	33%
Upper-Middle Income	16%
High Income	47%



# OUR REACH

Visitors to the SDG Academy website show the geographic spread of our global community of learners.



## Website Users

Statistics from July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

**387,987**

Pageviews

**183,194**

Sessions

**127,849**

Users

## Language of Users Engaging with [sdgacademy.org](https://sdgacademy.org)

English	<div style="width: 76.7%;"></div>	76.7%
Portuguese	<div style="width: 4.4%;"></div>	4.4%
Spanish	<div style="width: 4.0%;"></div>	4.0%
French	<div style="width: 3.0%;"></div>	3.0%
Italian	<div style="width: 2.3%;"></div>	2.3%
German	<div style="width: 1.9%;"></div>	1.9%
Swedish	<div style="width: 1.8%;"></div>	1.8%
Dutch	<div style="width: 0.8%;"></div>	0.8%
Chinese	<div style="width: 0.8%;"></div>	0.8%
Arabic	<div style="width: 0.8%;"></div>	0.8%



**84.1%**

New visitors



**15.9%**

Returning visits

# COURSE ENROLLMENTS

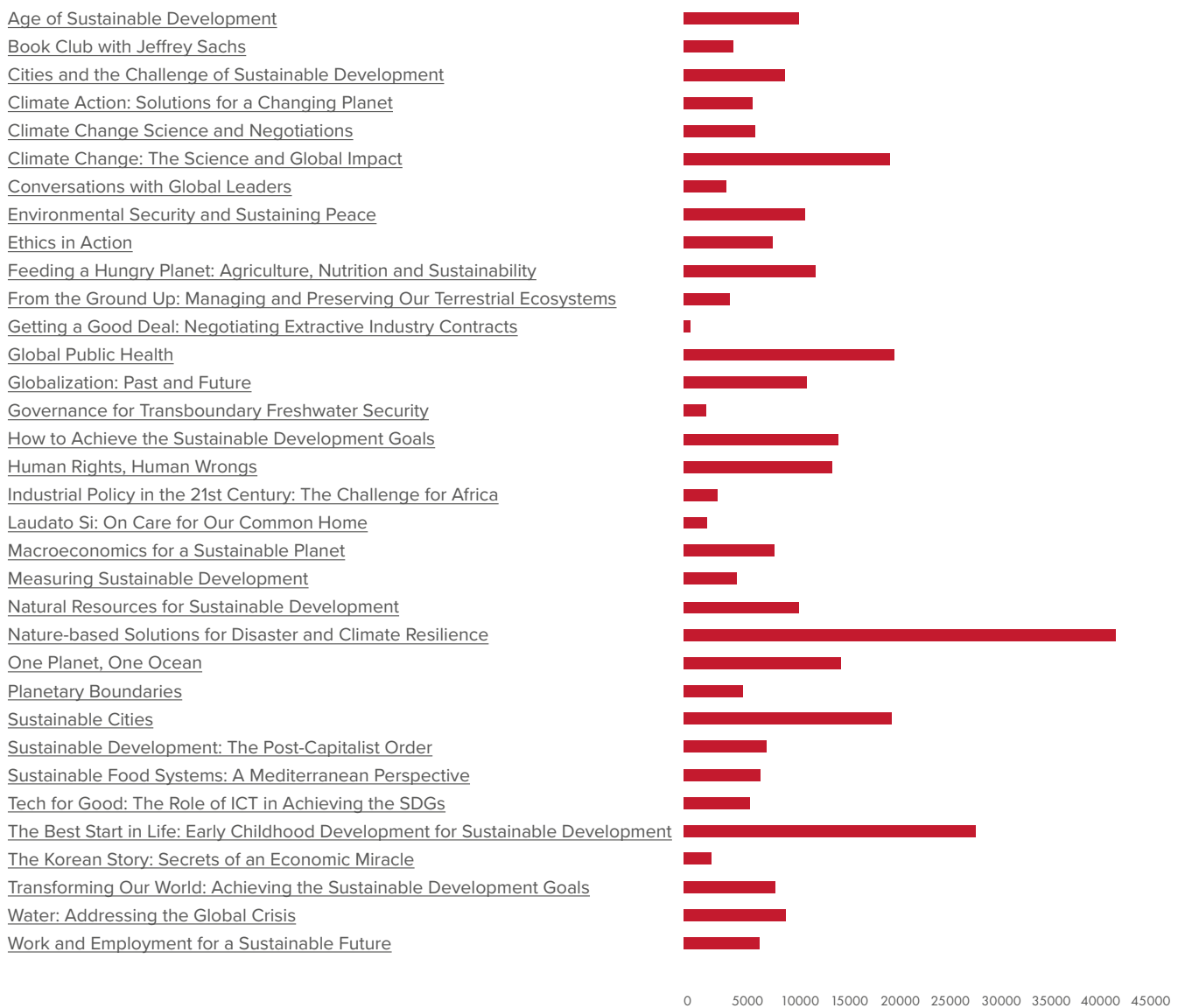
**173,685**

Total enrollment in FY21,  
1 July 20 - 30 June 21

**641,070**

Cumulative enrollment since  
inception across a variety of  
platforms and formats

## Total Enrollments by Course on edX

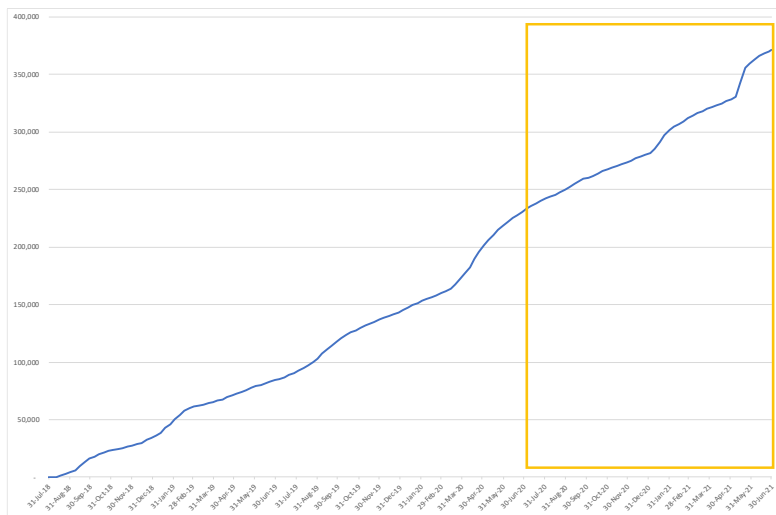


# MEASURING SUCCESS

The following graphs show the performance of SDG Academy enrollments over time. Both graphs feature a golden box highlighting our performance in FY21.

The top graph is a measure of cumulative enrollment, showing overall growth over time. The bottom graph shows cyclical enrollment trends that coincide with the academic calendar. This suggests that learners enroll in SDG Academy courses to align with or imitate formal coursework.

## Overall edX Learners Over Time



## Top edX Courses by Overall Enrollments

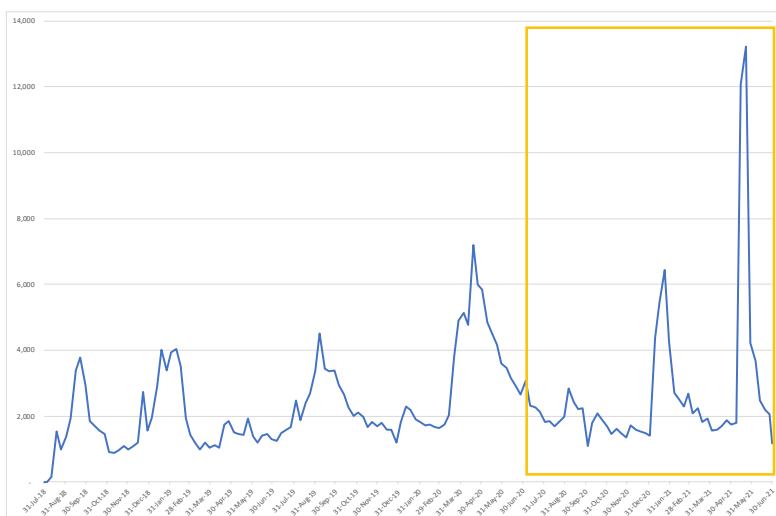
# 43,239

Nature-based Solutions  
for Disaster and Climate  
Resilience

# 29,220

The Best Start in Life: Early  
Childhood Development for  
Sustainable Development

## Weekly edX Enrollment Over Time



# 21,114

Global Public Health

# 20,803

Sustainable Cities

# 20,663

Climate Change: The Science  
and Global Impact

# MEASURING SUCCESS

August 2021 marks three years of SDG Academy content on edX. We've seen historic growth in the wake of COVID-19: Last year, we reported on tremendous periods of enrollment growth that were related to the need for online content that could be freely accessed around the world.

This year, the trend of COVID-19 era enrollments has continued. Not only have we seen growth in the demand for SDG Academy videos and resources during COVID-19, but we have also seen a growth in partner created content.

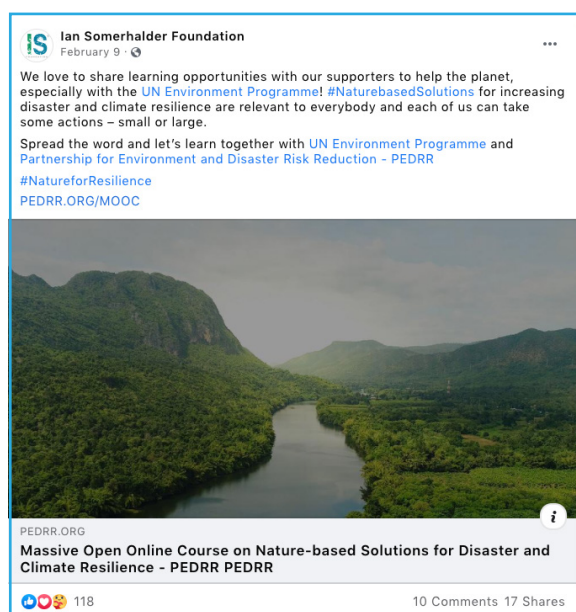
## Record-setting Enrollment

In FY21, the SDG Academy saw three record-setting weeks:

- January 24, 2021
- May 16, 2021
- May 23, 2021

The week of **January 24** saw tremendous growth thanks to two factors: The launch of Nature-based Solutions for Disaster and Climate Resilience on January 22 and the enrollment spike for the first session of the Book Club with Jeffrey Sachs on January 28.

The weeks of **May 16** and **May 23** showed spikes in enrollment due to the role of social media influencers encouraging followers to join UNEP's Nature-based Solutions course.



**Ian Somerhalder Foundation**  
February 9 · 🌐

We love to share learning opportunities with our supporters to help the planet, especially with the [UN Environment Programme!](#) [#NaturebasedSolutions](#) for increasing disaster and climate resilience are relevant to everybody and each of us can take some actions – small or large.

Spread the word and let's learn together with [UN Environment Programme](#) and [Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction - PEDRR](#)

[#NatureforResilience](#)  
[PEDRR.ORG/MOOC](#)

[PEDRR.ORG](#)

**Massive Open Online Course on Nature-based Solutions for Disaster and Climate Resilience - PEDRR PEDRR**

👍👍👍 118      10 Comments 17 Shares

## Use of “Influencers”

This is the first year where we saw “influencers” help attract new enrollments as part of the UNEP team’s creative marketing strategies.

Not only did the influencers drive growth in the absolute number of enrollments, their work also impacted the average age of enrolled learners by bringing a younger demographic to the SDG Academy than our traditional learner population.



**Dia Mirza** ✓  
@deespeak

Nature offers many ways to address the climate crisis and increase resilience to disasters. Learn more on what you can do to support nature through this free online course on Nature-based Solutions

🌍🌱🐦

Register now [#NatureforResilience](#)  
[PEDRR.ORG/MOOC](#)

Let's give back to Nature, protect & nourish human well-being. Join our course today!

Learn more about opportunities for green growth.

Adopt Nature-based Solutions and learn how to build resilience to disasters and climate change.

👤 You and 3 others

6:23 AM · Feb 12, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

68 Retweets   5 Quote Tweets   337 Likes



Get involved with Nature-based Solutions to combating climate change. Join our course!

**rekydawn1** We need to spread the word about the multiple benefits [#NatureBasedSolutions](#) has to offer. Join this free online course from [@PEDRRnetwork](#) and [@UNEP](#) to learn more on what you can do for nature. Link in my bio.

[#NatureforResilience](#)

27w

👍👍👍 Liked by [pedrnetwork](#) and 127 others



# INVESTMENT IN LEARNING

Enrollments in SDG Academy courses have grown tremendously in the last two years, indicating an increased interest in our content and its message.

**85%** of all SDG Academy courses outperformed the edX average of **3.6%** of all learners pursuing verified-track enrollment. The even greater increase in learners pursuing a verified certificate shows that learners are willing to invest in their SDG Academy education.

## Top Courses by Verified-Track Learner Engagement

Measuring Sustainable Development	15.3%
Getting a Good Deal: Negotiating Extractive Industry Contracts	13.3%
Transforming Our World: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals	11.1%
Cities and the Challenge of Sustainable Development	10.0%
Governance for Transboundary Freshwater Security	9.9%
Age of Sustainable Development	9.1%
From the Ground Up: Managing and Preserving Our Terrestrial Ecosystems	9.0%
Planetary Boundaries	8.7%
Macroeconomics for a Sustainable Planet	8.5%
Climate Change: The Science and Global Impact	8.4%
How to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals	8.3%
Sustainable Development: The Post-Capitalist Order	8.2%
Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home	8.0%
Climate Action: Solutions for a Changing Planet	7.6%
Global Public Health	7.3%
The Best Start in Life: Early Childhood Development for Sustainable Development	7.0%
One Planet, One Ocean	6.9%
Natural Resources for Sustainable Development	6.6%
Industrial Policy in the 21st Century: The Challenge for Africa	6.4%
Environmental Security and Sustaining Peace	6.4%
Tech for Good: The Role of ICT in Achieving the SDGs	6.2%
Feeding a Hungry Planet: Agriculture, Nutrition and Sustainability	6.1%
Water: Addressing the Global Crisis	5.9%
Human Rights, Human Wrongs	5.8%
Sustainable Cities	5.6%
Globalization: Past and Future	5.3%
Climate Change Science and Negotiations	4.9%
Sustainable Food Systems: A Mediterranean Perspective	4.2%
Ethics in Action	3.9%



# THE SDG ACADEMY LIBRARY

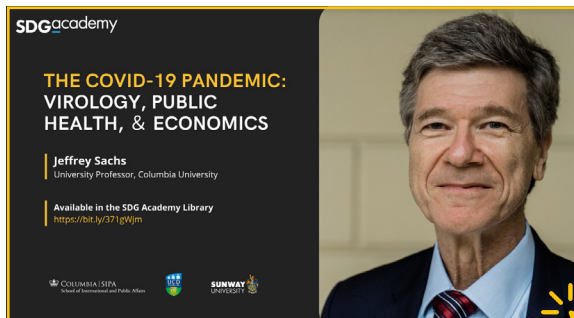
The [SDG Academy Library](#) provides a platform to expand the reach of high-quality, open educational materials on sustainable development and distribute this knowledge as a global public good with the intention to share, integrate, and contextualize its videos. The SDG Academy Library continues to grow and develop as an essential part of remote teaching and learning in this digital age. The SDG Academy Library makes all our course videos, webinars, and online events available and searchable by SDG, Lecturer, Subject, and more.

## New Video Series

In FY21, these included *Freedom Now: The Economic and Political Alternative*, a series from political philosopher Roberto Mangabeira Unger; *The COVID-19 Pandemic: Virology, Public Health, & Economics*, a series of lectures delivered by Prof. Jeffrey D. Sachs; and *The Turn: From Reactionary Populism to a Progressive Alternative*, a three-part series of conversations between Prof. Sachs and Prof. Unger.



**The Turn: From Reactionary Populism to a Progressive Alternative**



**The COVID-19 Pandemic: Virology, Public Health, and Economics**



**Freedom Now: The Economic and Political Alternative**



The SDG Academy Library empowers students to transform companies with the SDGs. Saint Joseph's University (USA) utilizes videos from the Library as a foundation for its undergraduate capstone course in their *Leadership, Ethics, and Organizational Sustainability (LEO)* degree program. Throughout the semester, students review, analyze, and present 2 videos per individual SDG for classroom dialogue. The videos provide content knowledge necessary for these students to effectively consult with live companies using the SDG Action Manager, an online assessment tool that measures corporate SDG impact. The SDG Academy Library offers an inspiring and invaluable contribution to student learning. As a result, students are directly empowered to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in their professional careers after graduation.

David S. Steingard, Ph.D.  
Director, SDG Dashboard

## Usage of the SDG Academy Library

Statistics from July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021

Attracted users from

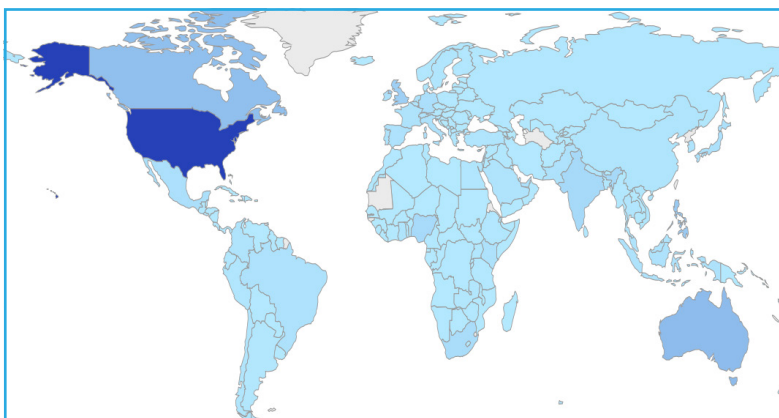
# 201

countries and territories

Videos viewed for a total of

# 413,613

minutes, 339,667 more minutes than last year



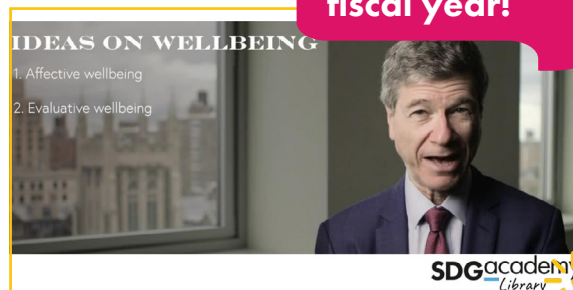
### Top Countries

1. USA
2. Taiwan
3. Australia
4. Canada
5. The Philippines

Most popular video from last fiscal year!

### Top Videos

1. Why Sustainable Development is Important: Happiness & Wellbeing
2. Introducing Sustainable Development
3. Getting to Know the SDGs
4. The Role of Business in the SDGs
5. The Moral Basis for Business Activity



# 1,500+

 Educational videos!


The SDG Academy Library is an excellent source of materials, but most of all, of inspiration that I seek to use personally and professionally in my classes. It presents several highly valuable insights from multiple disciplines and perspectives that allow for a more holistic view of various topics. To me, this is key to the development of critical and informed thinking in students. I am using SDG Academy Library as a supplement to the classroom lessons in flipped classroom logic.

Ana Simaens  
Assistant Professor & Director of MBA in Sustainable Management,  
Iscte Business School

# NEW INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT EDUCATION DURING COVID-19

While the COVID-19 pandemic challenged educational development around the world, it also provided us with a unique opportunity to rethink the way we create and deliver our educational resources on sustainable development and prompted us to engage in important global discussions about the role of education in building forward better. Building on our initial [COVID-19 response](#), the highlights from this past year include initiatives such as:



**New webinars and lecture series** with innovative content and online events to gather our communities remotely.



**New online filming and recording methods** to remotely develop new MOOCs and a podcast series.



The **Book Club with Jeffrey Sachs** provides learners an opportunity to gain knowledge and insight from renowned authors while connecting with a global audience of readers.



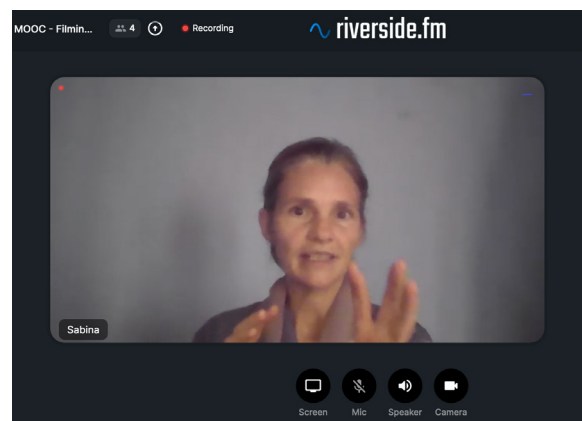
The launch of two **Online Master's Programs** in partnership with University College Dublin and Sunway University.



The adoption of a **Creative Commons license** to send a clear message that learners and educators can feel confident using our educational resources in the ways that are most useful for them.



## COVID-19 RESPONSE



Sabina Alkire, Director of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, uses the Riverside.fm platform to film a chapter for the upcoming course *Understanding Poverty and Inequality* remotely.



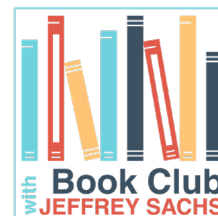
The [COVID-19 Pandemic: Virology, Public Health, and Economics] course is certainly a crystal ball into a future that we are currently living in. Vaccines alone can never be the solution. Comprehensive solutions can only work in a coordinated approach across nations.

Prof. Sachs brings together the best science, economics, and statistics to model COVID-19 pathways under various policy scenarios. This in turn is used to predict the expected economic, societal, environmental and governance futures of various nations. The class, based on programs in Columbia University, UCD and Sunway University, represented every country in the world, and we truly had a wonderful global dialogue about the COVID-19 pandemic with Prof. Sachs.

Patrick Paul Walsh,  
Full Professor, UCD SPIRe and Geary Institute

# BOOK CLUB WITH JEFFREY SACHS

The [Book Club with Jeffrey Sachs](#) was launched in January 2021. The Book Club offers monthly live conversations with renowned authors, a podcast series, and an interactive platform on edX to discuss some of the most important issues facing our society. [The edX platform](#) has more than 5,000 members, and we have seen over 6,000 [podcast](#) downloads to date.



They're stories about justice; they're stories about rationality and irrationality; they're stories about cruelty and heroism; they're stories that tell us about our past so that we have a better way forward, a way forward for the future we want.

Jeffrey D. Sachs

## 630

Average live attendance

## 556

Average Library views

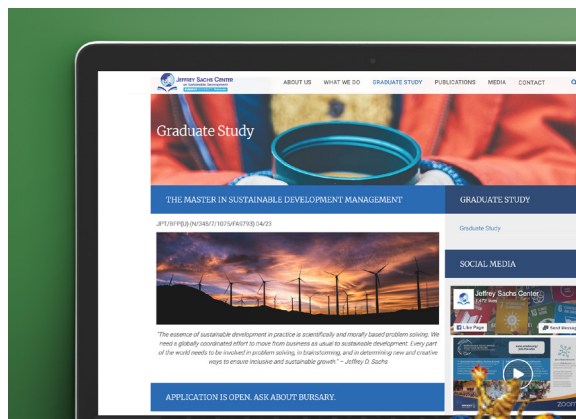
## Authors and Books Featured since January 2021



Check out the [upcoming sessions!](#)

# ONLINE MASTER'S PROGRAMS

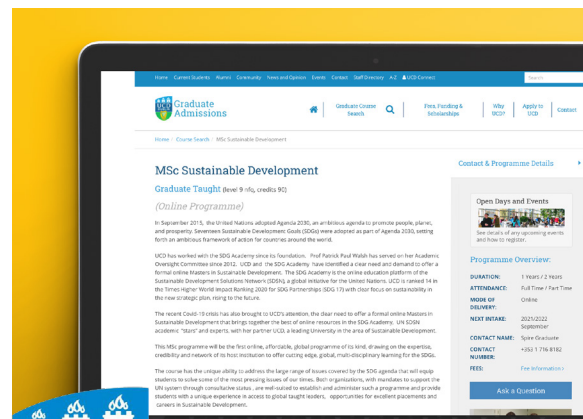
In August of 2020, the SDG Academy partnered with Sunway University and University College Dublin to launch two [Online Master's Programs](#) aiming to prepare the current and next generation with the tools, skills, and knowledge to build a fulfilling and challenging career tackling the world's biggest challenges.



Sunway University offers a 12-month, full-time [Master's in Sustainable Development Management \(MSDM\)](#) program that will equip students with the system-level thinking essential for achieving sustainable development (e.g. natural earth systems, socio-political stability); in-depth technical expertise in two fields of concentration (e.g. green urbanization, economic development); management skills (e.g. effective governance in public and private organizations); and research ability (e.g. geographic information system).

The classes are held at time slots convenient to students located in the geographical area from New Zealand to Turkey. Every class is co-taught by Sunway faculty members and SDG Academy experts. Students can also choose to be in Kuala Lumpur to receive in-person teaching when possible. The program enrolled 61 students in its first year.

By collaborating with the SDG Academy and SDSN, both programs gain access to a carefully curated set of global leaders from the worlds of science, policy, academia, the United Nations, civil society, and business. These experts provide global perspectives, cutting-edge knowledge, real-life lessons, and real-time engagement through live webinars in addition to pre-recorded lectures. The programs are designed to encourage peer learning among a truly global cohort of students dedicated to achieving sustainable development.



University College Dublin

The UCD [M.Sc. in Sustainable Development](#) program offers cutting-edge, multi-disciplinary, and trans-disciplinary learning for the SDGs. The program provides students with a unique experience to engage with leading academics and global thought leaders in virtual classrooms.

The core elements of the Master's require students to study the SDGs at the national level, city level, and through an SDG project.

The program includes a wide range of electives to cover the SDG agenda, such as social justice, climate change, industrial economics, food systems, and public health.

The Master's is a one-year, full-time program, but can be taken part-time over two years or more. The first cohort saw 66 students join from around the world.

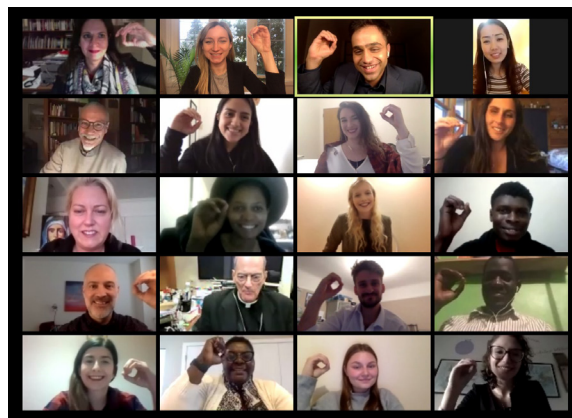
## MISSION 4.7

[Mission 4.7](#) is a new multi-partner initiative co-founded by the SDG Academy, Global Schools, UNESCO, the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, and the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University to advance the transformative education called for by SDG Target 4.7. We aim to do this through high level advocacy, building knowledge and mobilizing resources. Mission 4.7 is advised and supported by [two core groups of selected experts](#) who serve on the High Level Advisory Group and Education Task Force respectively.

[Mission 4.7 was launched](#) on 16 December 2020 at the seventh annual Vatican Youth Symposium by its patrons, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay with the support of His Holiness Pope Francis who shared a message with the 1000+ attendees.

“The Global Compact on Education and Mission 4.7 will work together for the civilization of love, beauty and unity. Permit me to say that you will have to be the poets of a new human beauty, a new beauty of fraternity and friendship, and of protection of the earth we inhabit,” His Holiness Pope Francis said at the launch event.

Since the launch, members of Mission 4.7 have met regularly to discuss the initiative’s objectives, which include securing high-level government commitments to Target 4.7, establishing pedagogical principles for transformative education, and showcasing existing individual and organizational contributions towards achieving Mission 4.7.



1000+ participants from around the world joined the launch event virtually.



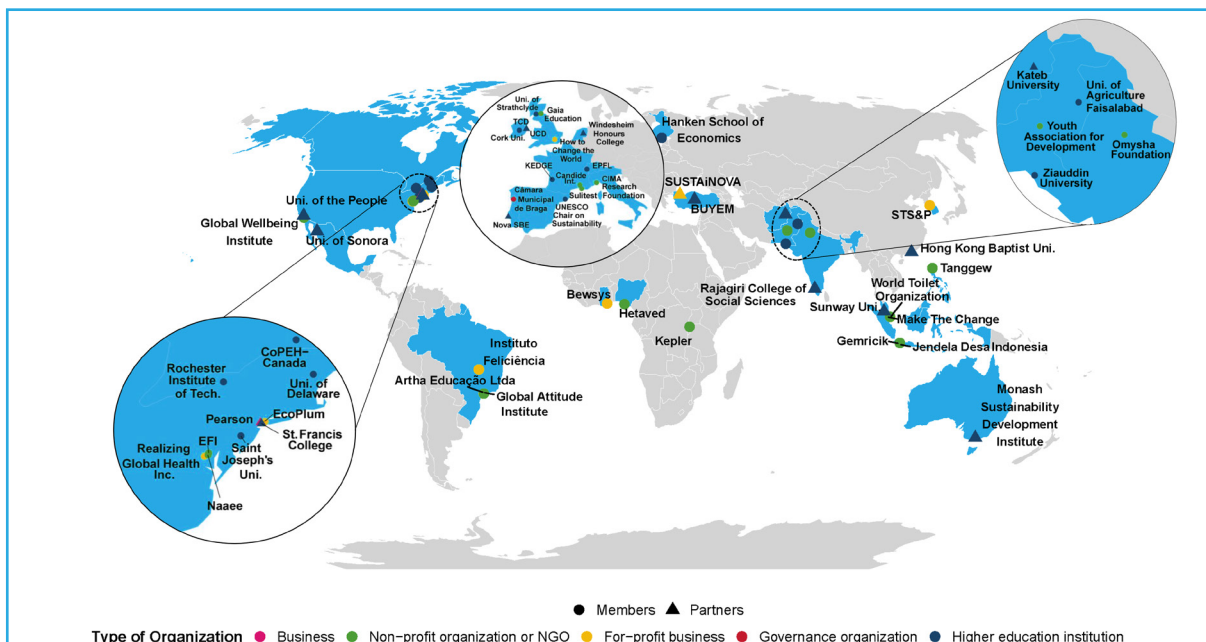
When we speak of rebuilding after the Covid-19 pandemic, we must start by what, where, and how we learn, so that it can reflect the society that we want. Target 4.7 was included in the Sustainable Development Goals to acknowledge that education must not only be universally accessible but also meaningful and empowering.

**Audrey Azoulay**  
UNESCO Director-General and Mission 4.7 Patron

# COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The [Community of Practice](#) was launched in September of 2020 to nurture a diverse community of higher education institutions, NGOs, for-profit businesses, and relevant government entities to advance education for sustainable development through peer learning, the sharing of best practices, customized resource development, and opportunities for research and thought leadership.

In its first year, the Community of Practice engaged 52 institutions globally including 15 Partners and 37 Members representing 27 countries. Ongoing recruitment of members is open and we encourage those interested to [apply here!](#)



As an educator passionate about sustainability and SDGs, I constantly strive to integrate ways to introduce my undergraduate students to the topic of sustainability and to the purpose and objectives of the SDGs. The Community of Practice has been invaluable for that purpose, as it not only provides access to the incomparable educational resources through the SDG Academy, but also provides the opportunity to share experiences and best practices with other like-minded educators across the globe. Being a Member has empowered me to encourage my peers and those within my other networks who want to teach sustainability to use what the Community has to offer as excellent complements to their own teaching.

**John Dilyard**  
St. Francis College, USA



# PARTNERSHIPS

The SDG Academy continues to collaborate and partner with institutions from around the world to advance our vision of realizing education for sustainable development. We are truly grateful for the support and commitment of our wonderful partners:



Working closely with partners allows us to support and catalyze new areas of action and leverage tipping points for system change toward achieving the SDGs. We look forward to continuing to engage in strong partnerships to address some of the most pressing issues of our time.

**Florencia Librizzi**  
Head of Program and Partnerships, SDG Academy

## EVENTS

During this period, we hosted several events in conjunction with the the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (UN HLPF), International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD), and more!

### United Nations High-Level Political Forum



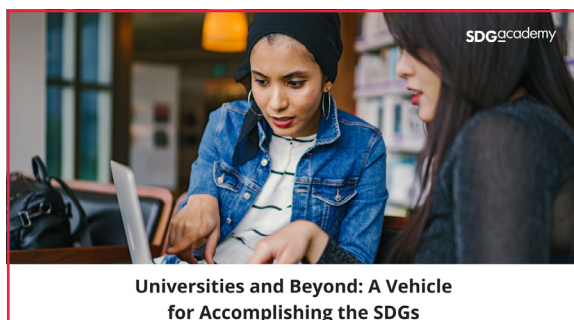
#### **Higher Education for Sustainability Initiative (HESI) High Level Event: Imagining the Future of Further Education at HLPF**

On July 8, 2020, the SDG Academy co-hosted, “Where Next? Redesigning Further Education for the Future,” a special event of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) hosted alongside the United Nations High-level Political Forum.



#### **Where We Are and Where We Need to Go: Reflections from the HESI Roundtable on Further Education Reform**

On July 15, the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) held a roundtable discussion of HESI partners to follow up on its July 8 Special Event. The SDG Academy was once again proud to co-host and offer technical support for the meeting.



#### **Universities and Beyond: A Vehicle for Accomplishing the SDGs**

On July 13, the SDG Academy, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), the International Association of Universities (IAU), L'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) co-hosted the workshop “Teaching, Learning, and Integrating the SDGs at Universities and Beyond – Linking to the Decade of Action” as part of UNITAR/UNDESA’s HLPF SDGs Learning, Training and Practice series.



---

## International Conference on Sustainable Development

---



### Interdisciplinary Approaches to Educate for Sustainable Development

On September 21–22, for the first time ever, the SDG Academy worked with other members of the SDSN network to coordinate a research theme and serve on the Scientific Committee. The session sought to present and discuss innovative ways of delivering education and engagement that enables and empowers students and future decision-makers to analyze and confront the interrelated challenges of the SDGs.



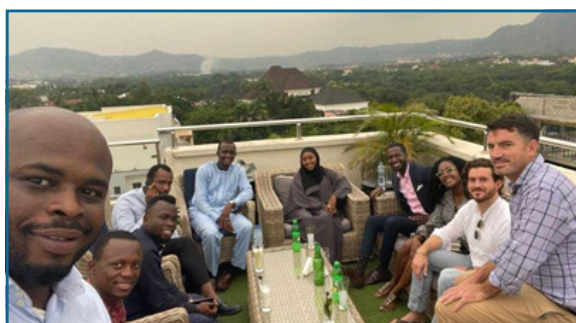
### Interconnected and Indivisible: Promoting interdisciplinary education for sustainable development at ICSD 2020

On September 23, the SDG Academy hosted a dynamic and interactive virtual event on the sidelines of the 8th Annual International Conference on Sustainable Development. The event probed a broad understanding of interdisciplinary education and allowed panelists and attendees alike to discuss and develop new ideas to meet the challenge of incorporating sustainable development into post-secondary education, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

---

## Events Sponsored by MDP

---



In July, the MDP Alumni held a Meet and Greet in Abuja, Nigeria. This was an opportunity for MDPers and environs to interact with one another while gaining insights from experiences at work and in the field. Participants took turns talking about their experiences and valuable life lessons after graduating from the program.



Every two months beginning in February, the MDP Students & Alumni Advisory Council (SAAC) Global Speakers Series is held.

# ENGAGING OUR ALUMNI

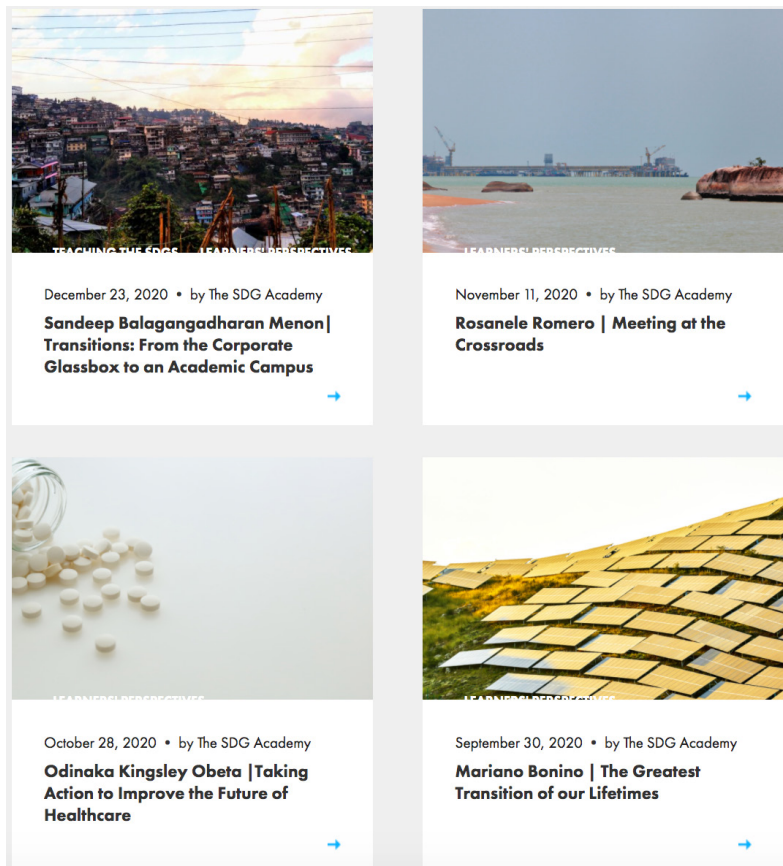
Created in 2018, the [SDG Academy Alumni Network Facebook Group](#) provides 5,500 course alumni with a platform to discuss the topics they learned in the courses; share stories, articles, and opportunities; and interact with the SDG Academy through polls, contests, and other calls for engagement. In the past year, we piloted an Alumni Advocates program with three alumni to encourage greater levels of alumni engagement within the Facebook group. The pilot will inform the creation of a more robust Alumni Advocates program in the future.

## Our Alumni Stories

One of the most exciting things about working at the SDG Academy is hearing the stories of our learners.

Each story tells us about a unique human being with dreams, purpose, and possibility to make the world a better place.

In the past year, we highlighted the stories of eight alumni through our [“Learners’ Perspectives” blog series](#), totaling 14 blogs that showcase the positive impact of our content on learners’ education, career paths, and overall commitment to sustainable development.



I felt empowered. It was the invitation that I was waiting for to be part of the conversation. The materials, the discussions, and the assessments helped me build my sustainable development muscle—to be able to carry my weight in discussions, online and offline. I learned to keep a blog to collect references, write my reflections, and deliver prose which I hope one day will guide younger geoscientists and sustainable development practitioners.

I hope that more people will be convinced that solutions sit in our common interests rather than in our opposing views.

**Rosanele Romero**  
SDG Academy Alumna

Read the rest of [her story](#) and the other [Learners’ Perspectives](#) blogs!

# THE MASTER'S IN DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE PROGRAM

The pandemic affected everyone, and the [Global Association of the Master's in Development Practice \(MDP\) programs](#) was no exception. Nonetheless, MDP institutions demonstrated resilience during the pandemic, turning COVID-19 into an opportunity. Ongoing recruitment of new MDP programs was a focus of the MDP Secretariat during this past year. In 2020, the Sharif Policy Research Institute at Sharif University of Technology, Iran, became the newest member in the Global Association of MDP programs.

Over the next year, resilience, improvisation, boldness, and growth will continue to define the MDP community and its activities, along with the addition of reflection through writing projects to document many of the Global Association's experiences over the past years.

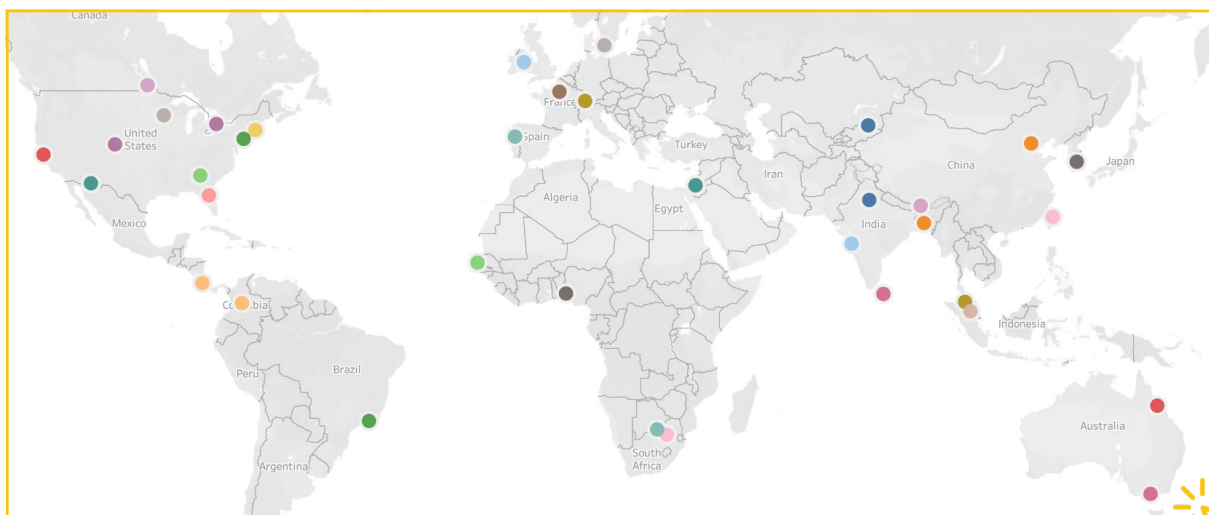
Participation increased in [Global Classroom](#) — a shared, online foundation of sustainable development course that is open to anyone who is interested and is required for all MDP participants. In this class, students have the opportunity to learn from global thought leaders, experts, and practitioners.

Improvisation also defined this past year. Instead of the on-the-ground experiences and field practicums that are typically core components of this degree, students participated in online, consultation-type experiences around the world.

Universidad de los Andes, Bogota, Colombia announced that 60 full-ride scholarships would be awarded to Afro-Colombians and Indigenous leaders to participate in their MDP program, showing that, despite the pandemic, equity, quality, and diversity were not to be detained.



Read more on the [MDP Blog!](#)

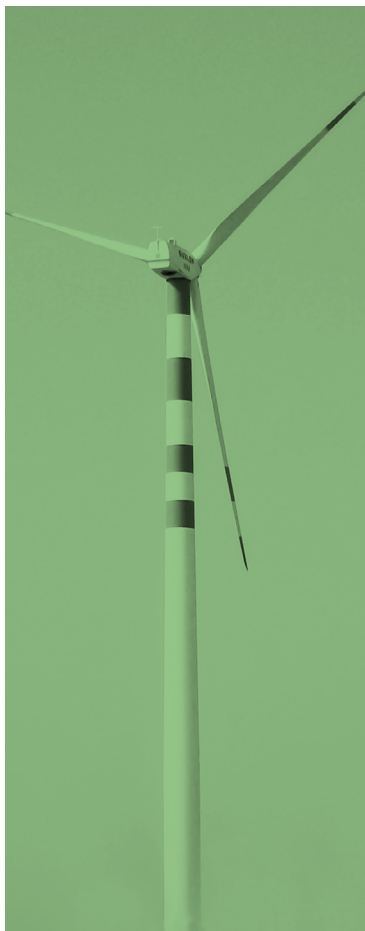


## FUTURE DIRECTION & OUTLOOK

As our societies focus on getting control of the COVID-19 pandemic and building a sustainable and resilient recovery, we believe that the SDG Academy's work is more relevant than ever. We are committed to delivering a robust and growing repository of new and compelling content as well as to supporting a vibrant community that advances education for sustainable development, everywhere.

In fiscal year 2022, an important focus will be the new SDG Academy office in Kuala Lumpur, opened with the generous support of the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation and hosted by the new SDSN Asia housed at Sunway University. This office will allow the SDG Academy to increase its footprint in Asia through a robust portfolio of educational flagship programs and partnerships in the region. We are truly excited about this next and important milestone made possible by the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation and Sunway University.

In addition, our priorities in the coming year will focus on improving our content and expanding our community to include the following concrete measures:



### ■ Expanding our Content

- Create and curate new courses
- Continue to develop monthly webinars and podcast episodes as part of the Book Club with Jeffrey Sachs
- Continue to create and include video content in the SDG Academy Library
- Explore new formats such as microcontent
- Expand remote filming capabilities for content development
- Amplify the work of SDSN member university faculty by giving them a global platform and enhancing regional content through a new Spotlight video series
- Continue to develop the new Online Master's Programs across more regions of the world, to support universities in teaching sustainable development in an affordable and accessible way
- Build Mission 4.7 to support education for sustainable development at all levels of education, from schools to universities to lifelong learning, as envisioned by SDG Target 4.7



# DECADE OF



## ■ Developing our Community

- Further grow our Alumni Network and actively engage our alumni to support and amplify our work
- Continue to develop and nurture a vibrant community dedicated to advancing education for sustainable development through peer learning and sharing of best practices, customized resource development, research and thought leadership through the SDG Academy Community of Practice and global MDP institutions
- Support SDSN member universities in teaching the SDGs
- Build partnerships to expand our reach, co-create new content, and promote learning for the SDGs




**ACTION**

# OUR TEAM



**Chandrika Bahadur**  
Director



**Florencia Librizzi**  
Head of Program and Partnerships



**Lucia Rodriguez**  
Director, Master's in Development Practice Secretariat



**Shannon Kobran**  
Education Manager



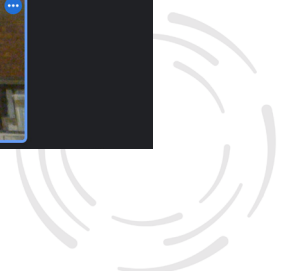
**Meredith Storey**  
Education Manager



**Kayla Colyard**  
Education Coordinator



**Samantha Thompson**  
Communications and Programming Intern





# OUR ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Our team is also supported by an Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) that provides strategic guidance. The current committee is comprised of the following individuals:



Alexander Leicht, Chief, Section of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education, UNESCO



Dan Groody, Vice President and Associate Provost, University of Notre Dame



David Smith, Director, Centre for Environmental Management, University of the West Indies



Eliana Fleifel, Sustainability Communications Specialist, Master's of Development Practice (MDP) Alumna, University of Waterloo



Joanna Rubinstein, CEO, World Childhood Foundation



Labode Popoola, Vice-Chancellor, Osun State University, & Co-Chair, SDSN Nigeria



Lisa Sachs, Director, Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment



Marcia McKenzie, Director, Sustainability Education Research Institute at the University of Saskatchewan



May East, UNITAR Fellow



Olanrewaju Olaniyan, Director, Centre for Sustainable Development & Health Policy Training and Research Programme, University of Ibadan



Padraig Carmody, Associate Professor, Trinity College Dublin



Patrick Paul Walsh, Chair, International Development Studies, University College Dublin



Ramu Damodaran, Former Chief, United Nations Academic Impact, United Nations



Rocky Tuan, Vice-Chancellor, Chinese University of Hong Kong, & Co-Chair, SDSN Hong Kong



Shireen Yacoub, CEO, Edraak

# GET INVOLVED

We look forward to working closely with you and joining forces to realize education for sustainable development as the vehicle to create a better world for all.



Learn more about the SDG Academy  
[sdgacademy.org](https://sdgacademy.org)



Explore our courses  
[edx.org/school/sdgacademyx](https://edx.org/school/sdgacademyx)



Browse the SDG Academy Library  
[sdgacademylibrary.mediaspace.kaltura.com](https://sdgacademylibrary.mediaspace.kaltura.com)



Join our Community of Practice  
[unsdsn.org/sdg-academy/community-of-practice](https://unsdsn.org/sdg-academy/community-of-practice)



Read our blog  
[sdgacademy.org/blog](https://sdgacademy.org/blog)



Subscribe to our newsletter  
[bit.ly/SDGA\\_Subscribe](https://bit.ly/SDGA_Subscribe)



Contact us  
[sdgacademy@unsdsn.org](mailto:sdgacademy@unsdsn.org)

Connect with us at the SDG Academy!

Twitter: [@SDG\\_Academy](https://twitter.com/SDG_Academy)

Facebook: [The SDG Academy](https://www.facebook.com/TheSDGAcademy)

LinkedIn: [SDG Academy](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sdg-academy)

Instagram: [@SDG\\_Academy](https://www.instagram.com/SDG_Academy)

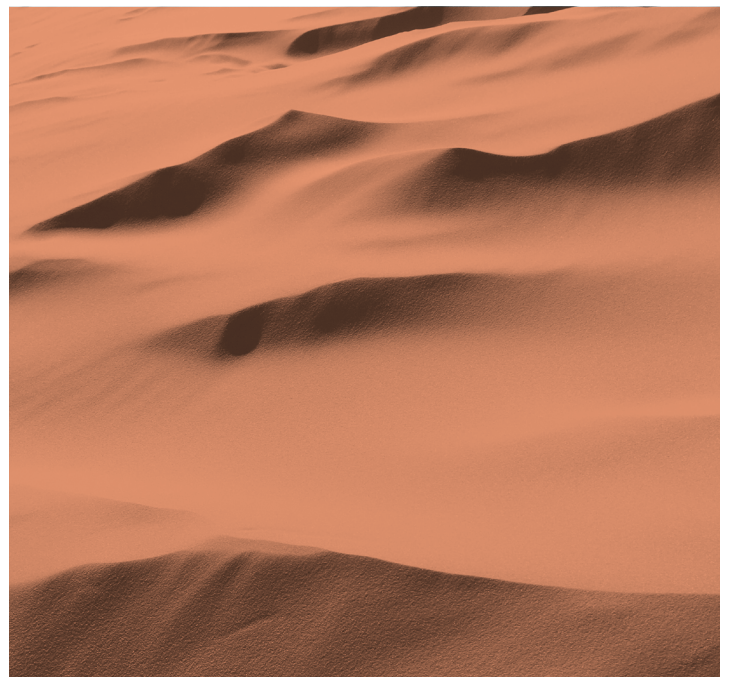


Connect with us at MDP Global!

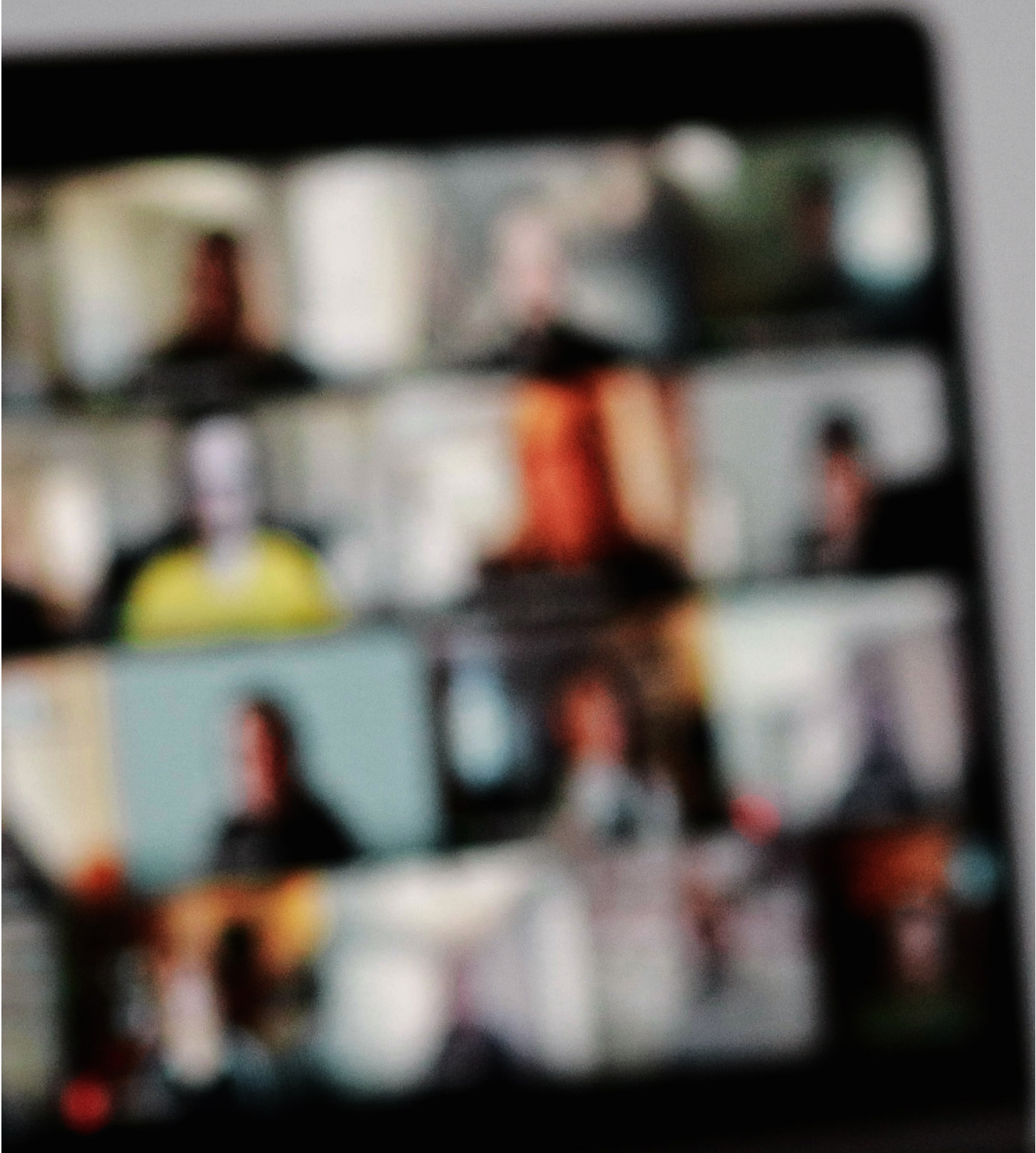
Website: [mdpglobal.org](http://mdpglobal.org)

Twitter: [@MDPGlobal](https://twitter.com/MDPGlobal)

Facebook Group: [Master's in Development Practice \(MDP\) Global Student Network](#)



Produced by the SDG Academy Team  
Designed by Amy Au ([@eimii\\_au](https://twitter.com/eimii_au))



[sdgacademy@unsdsn.org](mailto:sdgacademy@unsdsn.org)



[sdgacademy.org](http://sdgacademy.org)

**SDG**academy

