

3. Sustainability Framework and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS)

Sustainability Compass as a framework and as a tool provides a general overview, a methodological introduction, and stakeholder process guidance. It has been adopted for many uses including a classroom teaching and curriculum planning tool for educators. The Sustainability Compass, both as a symbol and as a category framework, is almost self-explanatory. A compass helps mapping the whole territory, and find our direction. This Compass takes the ordinary English-language directions -- North, East, South, West -- and renames them, keeping the same well-known first letters.

N is for Nature - All of our natural ecological systems and environmental concerns, from ecosystem health to resource consumption and waste.

E is for Economy - The systems by which we use nature, together with our own work and ideas, into goods, services, money and jobs.

S is for Society - The institutions and structures that organize our collective life as human beings, from government agencies to school clubs, as well as the cultural values underpinning them.

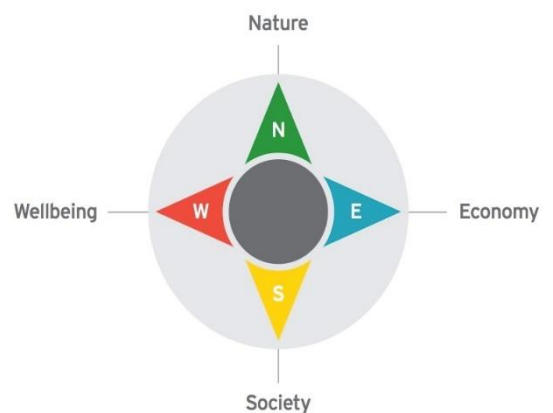
W is for Well-being - Individual health, happiness, and quality of life, which also includes the health and happiness of our families and others close to us, and our relationships to them.

Those four categories are not accidental. They correspond to categories created by prominent sustainability theorists, going back to the 1970s. The fact that the words line up so well with the four directions of a compass was a happy coincidence, discovered in 1997 by Alan AtKisson at an international meeting on indicators of sustainability, sponsored by the Dutch government. Since then, the Sustainability Compass has spread around the world.

These four category descriptions are general, but they can (and really must be) extended and elaborated with specific topics, depending on the specific use of the Compass. For example, the Sustainability Compass for business is quite different from the Compass for school use. But the four "Compass Points" still retain the same essential meanings.

Specifically and concretely, the Compass framework can be used to do the following:

- Explain sustainability to audiences of all kinds in clear, simple language
- Train and teach sustainability in a whole-system way



- Provide a unifying symbol for sustainability and sustainable development efforts
- Convene stakeholders and manage their involvement in sustainability initiatives, and ensure that you do not leave out any important perspectives
- Develop sustainability indicators and performance indices for an organization, company, city, or school
- Perform sustainability assessments and gap analyses for companies and other organizations

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

Here are the icons of SDSs

Sustainable Development Goals



These 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another.

academic institutions have a much broader responsibility and role to play to reach the wide-ranging SDGs.

3.1. How can universities contribute to the success of the SDGs?

The ultimate function of an academic institution is to provide youth with quality education. Therefore, universities play an essential role in teaching the younger generation about the wide spectrum of social, economic and environmental global challenges the world is currently facing. Moreover, as universities tend to hold the responsibility to advocate the importance of SDGs and play their part in fulfilling the SDGs in the following ways:

Research: Provide research knowledge, innovations and solutions towards achieving the SDGs. As universities tend to receive private and public research funds to directly and/or indirectly solve world issues, universities are responsible for providing the in-depth academic and vocational training needed to achieve the SDGs.

Institutional culture: Advocate for faculty members to help students set up networks, campaigns and projects to promote the importance of being an active member of society. Students need to take an active role in implementing their own research projects and recognizing opportunities to help attain the SDGs.

External leadership: Universities are responsible for raising awareness about the SDGs, whether through public lectures, community events or forums. Universities need to collaborate with other institutions and work with policymakers and leaders to identify problems and potential solutions to create a more sustainable, inclusive and innovative world.

Education for Sustainable Development (EDS) is a two-way street. It is evident that the UN's SDGs are ambitious and difficult to attain without an education sector that empowers future leaders to make responsible decisions that positively contribute to economic viability, environmental integrity and societal growth.