

UNEP- TERI School of Advanced Studies Stakeholder Dialogue Report

Establishing an India Green University Network

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Mr Atul Bagai Country Head, UNEP



Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe Chairman, AICTE



Mr. Sam Barratt Chief of YEA, UNEP

Context

The importance of a strong educational component for sustainable development was stressed at the 1992 Rio World Summit. The world has come a long way since then, and there is a growing realization that reckless and mindless exploitation of the Earth's natural resources in the name of development is responsible for the existential challenges that we are in today. Overcoming this ecological and social crisis requires a new ideology and an innovative approach especially in the field of education.

Higher education prepares youth, who are going to be leaders, decision makers, development professionals, managing institutions and hence will be the key influencers and flagbearers of change both behavioral and structural. It is quite reassuring to see that lately higher education institutions have become conscious of this fact and have started incorporating sustainable resource management into their core activities of teaching, research, institutional management, and operational systems.

However, there is an urgent need to scale up this initiative and move to a whole institutional approach. For which it becomes crucial to build synergies among different stakeholders and get them to share, collaborate and co-create. The Online Stakeholders' Dialogue, for establishing the India Green University Network (IGUN), brought out several insights on the need for establishment of a green university network for India, the existing green practices in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the country, and the challenges and potential solutions associated with it.

Why IGUN

"You can be paralyzed by fears as opposed to being inspired by hope." - Sam Barratt, Chief of YEA, UNEP

IGUN is for possibility and optimism. IGUN is a catalytic opportunity for institutions to think big and think differently about the role that they can play. There are 37 million students enrolled in higher education in India, and there are more than over a thousand universities, and therefore, the scope is enormous. Like the net-zero initiative by UNEP that has got a thousand universities come together from around the world to commit to being net-zero by 2030 or 2050, there is an opportunity for the Indian universities to rally around that as well.

It is important for HEIs to not just restore the landscape that surrounds them, but to think beyond and identify behaviours and practices that need immediate attention, for instance, the food in the canteen. Students' behaviour is one of the greatest things that can be changed to make a truly sustainable institution. How they will live the next 70 years will be determined by their experience during higher education. Therefore, it is important to get them to think differently about their choices that they make between the ages of 18 to 21.

The green university network is timely, because it has been six years since the 2015 Paris Agreement was ratified by 191 countries. Immediate mobilization of the youth shall help in reaching the 2030 targets efficiently. Additionally, intervening with the new upcoming universities in their foundational and formulation stages shall yield better results.

What can HEIs Do?

"The planetary emergency unfolding around us is, first and foremost a crisis of thought, values, perception, ideas and judgment. In other words, it is a crisis of mind, which makes it a crisis of those institutions which purport to improve minds."

- David Orr, Professor of Environmental Studies, Oberlin College

Be the change they wish to see

HEIs play a very vital role in educating the students on sustainability issues. They need to shed their image of an ivory tower and step up and set an example. Universities such as Takshila and Nalanda set examples to be the agents of change and the catalyst for social and political action, as well as centers for learning.

Putting Youth at the Center of Change

Students have often got better ideas, more energy, and the ability to do things that are transformational. The green network needs to be young and dynamic, and it needs to have people in the room to give the university leaders ideas that can be tried and tested. The emphasis must be on collaboration, servant leadership, and learning by doing. Sustainable development, as represented in various milestones concerning international environmental legislation, has much to do with greening - greening our minds. For this process, youth is going to be a major driver of change.

Adopt an Integrated Approach

The myth of higher education is that things that have been diminished can be adequately restored. The modern curriculum has fragmented the world into bits and pieces called disciplines and subdisciplines. As a result, after 12 to 16 years of education, most students graduate without any broad integrated sense of the unity of things. For example, economists often lack the most rudimentary knowledge of ecology. This explains why the national accounting systems do not subtract the costs of biotic impoverishment, soil erosion, poisons in the air or water and resource depletion from the gross national product. It's a telling summary of what our educational systems should be looking at. At a national level, while computing the gross domestic product, the ecosystem services and the cost associated with them must be accounted for. It is an integrated approach such as this that shall help in Greening the universities, greening our mindsets and greening our planet.

Greening of Curriculum

The new National Education Policy of India lays stress on the inclusion of sustainability in the curricula. Quality education as stated in the SDG 4, if suitably imparted to all the citizens of the country, right from age of three to onwards and then beyond in higher education, shall help in realization of all other goals. 'Holistic education' also becomes critical to bringing sustainability in our attitude, performance, and actions. HEls need to focus on multidisiplinary and interdisciplinarity approach to designing curriculum, for bringing inclusiveness in the learning process and resulting in innovative green solutions and research outcomes.

Connecting Back to our Culture

In the Indian philosophy, everything in nature is made up of five basic elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. These five elements have a direct connection with sustainability as well as with the environment. The Indian knowledge system is not only philosophically driven, but it has all the essential elements critical for thriving of the natural environment. Furthermore, in Indian

philosophy, 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' means the whole world is one family and how we support each other is important. In the phrase, "Sarve janah sukhino bhavantu", 'janaha' is not just human beings, but all beings on the planet, including animals, birds, all kinds of species, plants and in fact, even the non-living entities like rivers and mountains. Therefore, respect for nature is inherent in our culture and in our traditions.

Introspection: for a Truly Sustainable Lifestyle

The growing number of conveniences in the form of gadgets, appliances, and machines, which has eased the lives of people, have also a flip side that is severely impacting the environment. "The world has enough for everyone's needs, but not everyone's greed," said Mahatma Gandhi. Therefore, there is a need for everybody to introspect their needs as against their wants, to be able to use the resources judiciously.

Measuring your Waste

While greening the campus in terms of putting in a lot of plants and in terms of cleanliness is undoubtedly crucial, smartness comes in measuring what we consume and what we waste. Some important parameters for instance, can be measuring water usage and consumption of electricity. Measuring this shall help in timely course correction.

Transboundary Collaboration

Sustainable development is not bound by political or geographical limits. If one looks at the geography of the world, much of our natural resources like rivers, mountains, forest etc are transboundary in nature. Therefore, the mobilization of youth for IGUN should go beyond the Indian geographical territory. If India can mobilize and create a network with neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, China, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, and others, the impact is going to be manifold.

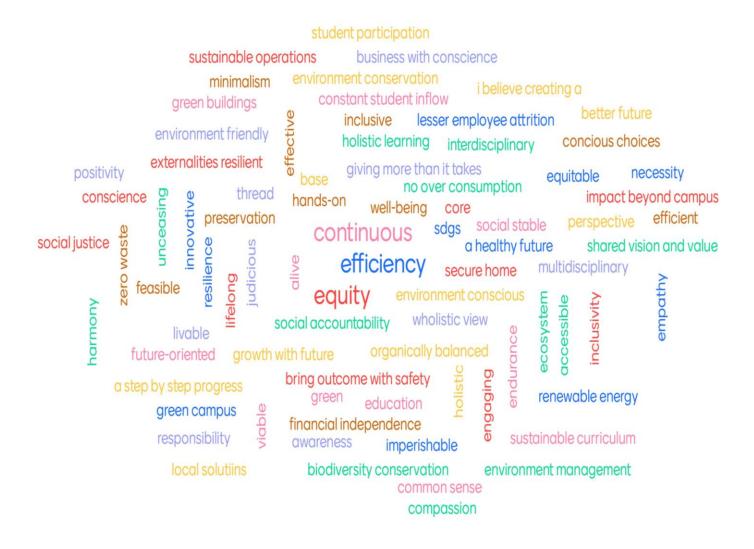
Mission

Convene, Communicate, Collaborate, Catalyze, Commit

Vision

To enable higher education institutes to become key enablers in India's sustainability journey and provide them with a platform to synergize and work towards a common goal of building a greener society.

Meaning of sustainability for HEIs



UNEP 4-Step Framework for Sustainable University

"The secret to a good network is being inclusive."

Mr. Iain Patton, CEO, EAUC, the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education

The Importance of having a Framework

The value of having a network and a framework is that it helps to break down some of those barriers of language or concept to give us a common language. Similarly, the SDGs give us a common language, just like a framework that helps us recognize that we have more in common than what separates us, and this provides a clear picture of how to act. If, for instance, there are many universities having a common problem in one part of the framework, the IGUN as a group can be a platform to help through that.

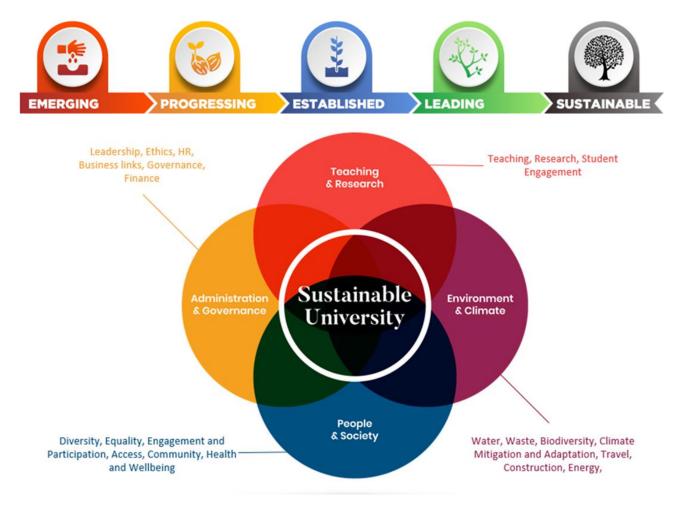


Figure 1- UNEP 4 Step Framework for Sustainable University¹

¹ <u>https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/36341/USUF.pdf</u>

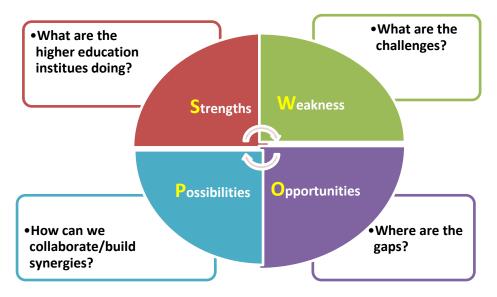
Regional Customization of the Framework

The approach should be *Collaborative and not Competitive*.

The flexibility of the framework is its strength and also its weakness. It is only a framework to help identify your journey that is more important than the tool. If it is a good tool, it can be made to fit anywhere, in any time, culture, opportunities, and challenges. The tool is a representation of a 'whole institution approach'.

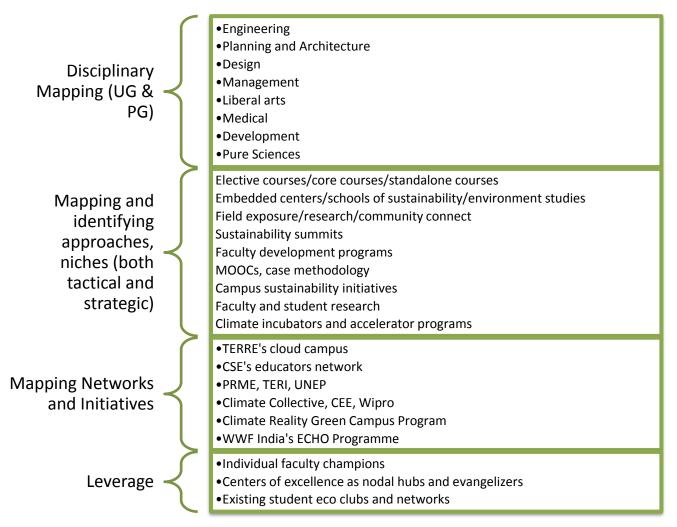
However, there is a need to think about how the framework can be internalized in the Indian setting. More so now after the pandemic, there is a need to seriously focus on the issues of diversity and social inclusion. Sustainability means different things to different people, what is efficient for someone may a compromise for somebody else. So, the trade-offs and social differences must be addressed.

SWOP Analysis



Unearthing Strengths

Painting a landscape of sustainability and higher education in India



What else are HEIs doing?



Identifying Challenges

We often run into trouble while attempting to mainstream or integrate environment and sustainability into our higher education institutions resulting in a gap between what we want and what we achieve.

The top obstacles

Sustainability in an institution usually becomes confined to an individual faculty or department's instead of adopting a whole institution approach.

Lack of capacity building programs to orient those faculty members who are not involved in sustainability roles and responsibilities

Integrating sustainability in courses being offered across programs

Disconnect between faculty and students. Often the student council does not have a voice in decision making related to certain sustainability projects and likewise there are initiatives undertaken by students where faculty involvement is insignificant.

Universities with sustainability focus face competition from the already established disciplines or traditional programs offered by other colleges. The existing yardsticks for measurement may not favour green institutes. There is a need to look at complementarity rather than competition.

Challenge of practicing of sustainability knowledge beyond campus and beyond academics.

How does sustainability become the major guiding principle in campuses?

Instead of just delegating the task and telling the youth about the projects, co-creation can take place where they are the stakeholders.

Tapping all the skill sets that the youth have and integrating them into the sustainability domain.

Institute should ensure synchronization of the career objectives with sustainability. It is critical to make sustainability a way of life for everyone.

Mandatory environment-based projects can be taken up by every student (or in groups) to design sustainable solutions to pressing problems related to the environment, conservation of resources and minimizing consumption patterns.

Youth representation in decision making bodies and establishing Youth Parliaments and mock COP, where they are able to speak to policy makers.

Nurture platforms that respects diversity and takse into account regional perspectives and the special needs of a variety of institutions

Exploring Opportunities

"A Networked and Nested Whole Institution Approach to Sustainability" -aiming to reach a larger goal requires connecting the various niches of change and transformation found around the world to build the foundation for a strong transition movement.

Approach to Sustainability

Inspired by Kate Roberts concept of the doughnut economy which essentially advocates for living within ecological boundaries while also maintaining a quality social foundation. We must see the social and ecological as a cohesive unit, as enshrined in the SDG's as well.

Path of Change

People around the world are already making meaningful changes in terms of localized food systems, lesser dependence on fossil fuels/pesticides etc. Another meaningful change occurring is the evolution of more self-determined and decentralized systems of governance. These governance systems are critical to ensure a better quality of life in terms of the air we breathe as well as management of natural disasters such as droughts.

The Role of Universities

- Are our universities responsive to these changes?
- Are we relevant to today's global challenges that are emerging?
- Are we re-imagining a more active role for young people?

This is a pertinent prompt as, without the hope for a better future, we risk for education to become a doom and gloom situation. Thus, young people must be given impetus from universities and external influences such as NGO's, civil society organizations, local governments and even schools. This can be in the form of various green initiatives undertaken like greening rooftops, school grounds etc. In the cases of HEIs, it can even mean using living labs to engage different stakeholders to work towards sustainability.

This gives way to another set of crucial questions which are,

- How does higher education connect with these movements?
- How can students and staff participate, contribute and vice-versa?
- How can these movements benefit from the wisdom collected in our HEI's?

The key is in the gathering of knowledge. Not just scientific knowledge but weaving it in with local knowledge, indigenous knowledge and experiential knowledge. It becomes essential to

bring in the voices of young people who are beginning to ponder and hope for a better future. Similarly, it also becomes important to recognize the stake of heavily impacted populations such as those who are poverty-stricken when coming to solutions. Therefore, a more holistic view of education and learning has never been more important.

The UNESCO global education monitoring report which is an imagery of how universities and schools can become living laboratory for learning to live sustainably on the earth with different forms of learning, different forums, and different connections with the community is worth emulating. Only when we can achieve better synergy between schools, universities, and the community; we will be able to see society working together in a social learning process.

The universities must make models out of themselves by trying to experiment with lowering their carbon footprints, ecological footprints and even expanding their ecological handbrake. The role of teachers becomes more pronounced to achieve this integrated and moralistic form of growth. This necessitates better capacity building for teachers by means of collaborating with external bodies such as CSO's, interest groups, advocacy groups etc. It will also be a lesson in dealing with conflict and diversity which adds up to meaningful learning as well.

The curriculum too must accommodate this stance by being more nested in local issues and show how we have sustainability challenges all around us. It must also make use of various kinds of pedagogies and learning such as social learning, transformative learning or even transgressive learning. And while on this path, there needs to be a vision that allows people to co-create.

Adopting a whole institution approach to strengthen sustainability in the society

When aiming to establish a network such as IGUN, the collaboration needs to be on a huge scale with hundreds of HEI's as well as multiple stakeholders to achieve success in the long run.

As for CSE's experience with HEI's, they are currently involved with programs on the same. One being the green educators' network wherein CSE is directly in touch with educators to understand their needs and concerns to better their understanding around environmental issues, making it easier to carry forward the same to the classrooms. Their second initiative is the green campus network which focuses on hand-holding institutions by motivating them to adopt more green practices on campus.

CSE believes that for effective collaboration to occur, the approach should be global to local. This should be followed by defining clear goals which must accommodate institutions' unique requirements as well. Lastly, there is a need for a multi-sectoral approach to sustainability.

-Ishita Rawat, CSE

Incorporating youth voices for taking the SDG Agenda forward and engaging with the local environment

The most important factor to involve youth is to incentivize their participation. This will be a big boost towards mainstreaming sustainability at the HEI level. This should be accompanied by more project opportunities for students as well as platforms to showcase their work. These three in tandem can really accelerate efforts to mainstream sustainability as an active objective instead of a passive one.

- Alok Gupta, EnvEcologic

I think today's youth is really looking for meaningful lives and all we require is facilitation, support, and opportunities. Engagement through platforms towards achieving the SDG's, peer education and leadership opportunities with different organizations are some steps to take. Further, to amplify youth voices, we require better youth political representation.

- Charvie Mishra, TERI SAS

The first thing that comes to my mind when we talk about a green university network is that universities are not just education providers but should be able to contribute to environment building and hence youth engagement is critical. An essential element to engagement and participation for the students is to be able to generate awareness. For that, we need to create a responsible studentship.

One of the best things that I feel really works well is creating awareness and letting them know their voice matters. When we look at HEI's across the country, it is a diverse group and student engagement becomes harder in that case. Thus, building that confidence within students matter.

Another important thing which I am an advocate of is an intergenerational partnership. We are currently working on the same with TERI SAS students and creating mentorship relationships. Apart from this, we will have to work closely with students through informal dialogues within and outside the campus and get investors to take a big lead here as well.

Pranab J Patar, Global Foundation for Advancement of Environment

Policies/interactions required for transitioning from the culture of control thinking to a culture of joint learning, co-creation, investigation, sharing and experiential learning

When we talk of policies, the question that comes to mind is what should a policy do? It should create dynamic capability and relational practices. Further, the essence of such a policy must be based on the fact that it creates an ability to respond, reflect, rethink and recalibrate. And not just once, but periodically. Thus, it will depend on the social context and the kind of society, essentially the school, the university, the neighbourhood, the cultural context where it is being put up.

It also must create a capacity for critical thinking, reflexivity, and transformation because to me, sustainability is creating that capacity. If you go by two very detailed review papers of UN on the decade of education for sustainable development, in that you will see that the main agenda was social learning. So, they said that the policies should be addressed for social learning to be put in practice.

- Anandajit Goswami, Manav Rachna University

I think this question can be answered with reference to the National Education Policy (NEP). One of the major changes that we see in the NEP is a shift from a tight regulatory and inspectorial regime to one which is based on trust and accountability. This has given us a lot of opportunity to bring sustainability in our education. So, I have three suggestions in that context. One is regarding the curriculum, as I think that NEP has given us a lot of flexibility with regard to curriculum designing. Thus, I think that a curriculum that can evoke curiosity among students and encourage critical thinking is necessary. Further, it should be multi-disciplinary, address local issues and should focus on fieldwork as well.

The second suggestion is with regard to the admission and recruitment process. Having worked in different institutions, I feel that students and faculty often come from similar socio-economic backgrounds. And if we confess to ourselves, most of our learning occurs outside the classroom. So, I think in our admission and recruitment process, there has to be a lot of emphasis given to diversity and inclusion. This applies to faculty selection as well.

The third point is with regard to infrastructure and community engagement. I think that the curriculum and the activities within the universities will also have a lot of emphasis on community service.

-Shiju MV, Sai University Chennai

I feel that more than deliberating on policies, now is the time for action. Thus, interactions should be action-oriented as community-level interaction is very important to bring behaviour changes and awareness through students.

- Shirin Shikalgar, Symbiosis, Pune

"The national education policy highlights environmental consciousness and citizenship values. Reflective understanding requires us to have a sense of passion and commitment from all stakeholders. The three Es from a reflective autonomy perspective is 1. Engagement with issues of environmental consciousness. 2. Empathy to diversity, accessibility and inclusion. 3. Emancipation- the outcomes have to be studied in terms of improvement in the current conditions."

"Supreme Court had also mandated teaching of environment science and constitution of India. AICTE has added Universal Human Values and Indian Knowledge Systems as mandatory courses in addition to constitutional values and environment for three years."

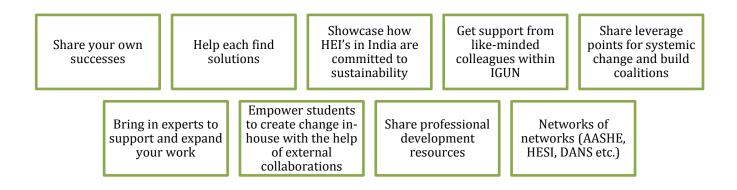
Building Networks

Key to Success

For sustainability in HEI's to be a success, there are key competencies that are necessary to be a change agent. It's worthwhile to look at what's out there in terms of what we need to be teaching our students, not just about the sustainability challenges and potential solutions, but the mindsets, the skills, the attitudes that they need to be able to move forward Based in 44 countries around the world, AASHE is quite international in terms of who participates despite being based in the United States. They host an international conference annually on sustainability in higher education and also have their own hub.

AASHE has STARS as the sustainability tracking and rating system. It is a comprehensive assessment to measure an institution's sustainability performance holistically. It's important to localize things, but if you want to start with just looking at criteria or what they call the credits, it'll give you a sense of a self-assessment as to where your institution is at and what it can do to move forward. And then you can decide whether you want to participate in STARS as so many universities do around the world, or if you want to do your own version of some kind. AASHE is a great place, but it's not the only place (Refer resources at Annexure1)

Things that networks can do for you-



What excites you about IGUN?

We at the Global Policy Diplomacy and Sustainability fellowship think that IGUN is going to help us through universities and organizations to further our aims of networking. However, networks and networking need to be seen differently when you're in the sustainability space and networking plays a very big role considering the pace at which this dimension is developing.

What excites me about IGUN is that with the sort of information asymmetry that exists in our industry, and universities and organizations doing well on their own, it can aid the missing link between these stakeholders.

One objective that we should also keep in mind is upholding industry standards with upscaling and upskilling in a way that the private sector can also come in with monetization which is a much-talked-about topic, especially when it comes to sustainability. Circularity should be the industry standard going forward.

Lastly, we should also look at filling the gap for professionals who aren't from specialized courses or students and are professionals looking to work in sustainability now.

-Eeshan Chaturvedi, Jindal University

Speakers

Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Vice-Chancellor, TERI School of Advanced Studies Mr. Atul Bagai, Country Head, UNEP Prof Anil Sahasrbudhe, Chairman AICTE Mr. Sam Barratt, Chief of YEA, UNEP

Mr. Iain Patton, CEO, EAUC, the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education

Mr. Abhijit Paul Zacharia, Program Manager, Sustainability & Education, WIPRO Foundation

Prof. Arjen Wals, Wageningen University

Dr. Debra Rowe, President of the U.S. Y Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development and Senior Advisor, AASHE

Ms Carina Mutschele, Youth and Education Officer, UNEP

Organizers

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading environmental authority in the world within the United Nations System. Its mission is to "provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UNEP works with governments, the private sector, civil society and with other UN entities and international organizations. UNEP's work is spread out in various areas such as disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, climate change, chemicals and waste, environmental governance etc.

TERI School of Advanced Studies (TERI SAS)

TERI School of Advanced Studies was set up as a Trust by TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute) -a not-for-profit, independent research institute recognized globally for its contribution to scientific and policy research in the realms of energy, environment, and sustainable development in 1998. In 1999, the TERI School of Advanced Studies was granted the 'Deemed to be University' status by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and notified via the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Department of Education, Government of India.

Moderators and Team

Gayatri Raghwa Consultant, UNEP Fawzia Tarannum Assistant Professor, TERI SAS Anshita Jindal Divija Kumari Dayadra Mandal Project Interns

Dialogue recording and resources

- AASHE Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education <u>https://www.aashe.org/</u> - (see the Resource Hub, conference info, webinars and the Bulletin)
- Sustainability Tracking & Rating System from AASHE <u>https://stars.aashe.org/</u>
- HEASC Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium
 <u>https://www.aashe.org/partners/heasc/</u>
- DANS Disciplinary Associations Network for Sustainability

https://www.aashe.org/partners/dans

- UNEP YEA Global Guidance Doc on educating for a green and inclusive economy <u>https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/education-environment/what-we-do/green-jobs-youth</u>
- Green Learning Network from Green Growth Knowledge Platform (multiple UN agencies) <u>https://thegreenforum.org/user/register</u>
- Higher Education Sustainability Initiative
 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/hesi
- US Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development <u>https://uspartnership.org/</u>
- Youth led Global Climate Education Network <u>https://www.gcenetwork.org/</u>
- Sustainability Literacy Test <u>https://www.sulitest.org/</u>
- DebraRowe@aya.yale.edu
 Debra Rowe, Ph.D.
 President
 U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development

Founder and Facilitator <u>Disciplinary Associations Network for Sustainability</u> <u>Sustainability Improves Student Learning</u> Project

Co-founder and Program Director Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium

- <u>https://teriuni-</u> <u>my.sharepoint.com/personal/fawzia_tarannum1_terisas_ac_in/Documents/Attachments/Little%20book%2</u> <u>0of%20green%20nudges.pdf</u>
- Recording : <u>https://youtu.be/BU8kruMzPIA</u>

List of Participants

S No	FullName	College/University/Organisation
5. 140	runvarre	SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS
1	Mr Atul Bagai	Country Head, UNEP India
	Mr Sam Barratt	Chief of YEA, UNEP
-	Dr Eklabya Sharma	Vice Chancellor, TERI SAS, Delhi
4	Prof Anil Sahasrbudhe	Chairman, AICTE
	Mr. Iain Patton	CEO, EAUC, The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education
6	Abhijit Paul Zacharia	Programme Manager, WIPRO Foundation
7	Gayatri Raghwa	Consultant, UNEP
8	Debra Rowe	Senior Advisor, AASHE
9	Carina Mutschele	Youth Education Officer, UNEP
10	Anshita Jindal	TERI SAS, Delhi
11	Divija Kumari	TERI SAS, Delhi
12	Dayadra Mandal	TERI SAS, Delhi
13	Fawzia Tarannum	TERI SAS, Delhi
14	Charvie Mishra	TERI SAS, Delhi
		UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES
15	Dr Mahbubul Hoque	University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya
16	Prof Saroj K Nayak	Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bhubaneswar, Orissa
17	Prof. Naima Khatoon	Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, UP
18	Dr Bibhu P. Nayak	TISS, Hyderabad, Telangana
19	Dr Anandajit Goswami	Manav Rachna International University, Delhi NCR
20	Dr Shiju M. V.	Sai University, Chennai
21	Prof Omar Farooq	ZH College of Engineering and Technology, AMU, Aligarh, UP
22	Dr Gaurav Mishra	Development Management Institute, Patna, Bihar
23	Dr. Shirin Shikalgar	Symbiosis Community Outreach Programme and Extension, Pune
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	Prof Eeshan Chaturvedi	Jindal University
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	Bhavesh Swami Madhavi Joshi	The Climate Reality Project India
		CEE CEE
	Kartikeya Sarabhai Radhika Suri	WWF India
		WWF India
	Ambreen Khan	
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52		LIVECOUGIC