



A MAPPING STUDY ON THE DESIGN, COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG ACTIVITIES AMONG UMAP INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

FINAL REPORT



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Introduction



Diagram 1 : Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are defined by UNESCO as that urgent call that requires all countries, regardless of their development status, to work together in the form of a global partnership in addressing key issues that deal with the basic essence of human life. The concept of SDG needs to be instilled in the minds and hearts of the young people. This study aims to look at the design of SDG programs in universities, how messages on SDGs are being communicated and also how they are being implemented at the respective institutions.

The emphasis on SDGs tends to differ from various parts of the world. East Asia has seemed to be at the forefront in introducing the SDG concepts and emphasizing its importance as a key pillar in the field of academia. For example, in the Thai contexts, one case study was presented by the Chulalongkorn University (CU) in Thailand to illustrate broader global challenges, particularly pinning down the roles of academia in teaching SDG2 simultaneously, proposing a new multi-disciplinary theoretical framework for assessing SDG2 at CU to better address agro-environmental problems and achieving sustainability in the agri-food system. (Nelles et.al , 2022).

As in the case of a Taiwanese university, National Chi Nan University (NCNU) has successfully brought forward a green campus initiative that incorporated environmental protection measures into the university's operations management. The strategy is deemed viable for

disseminating sustainable development concepts in higher education institutions thus fostering a more sustainable living environment on campus. In addition, the university has explored different avenues to integrate practical courses of environmental education in the NCNU curriculum which are evident in the "Citizenship Cultivation Plan," "University without Boundary Project" and "University Social Responsibility (USR) Plan," to name a few. These efforts are so as to heighten awareness of local environmental issues among the university community and to arrive at a consensus for sustainable environmental development. In addition to encouraging faculty and students to get involved in the community, the concepts of sustainable development and environmental protection are integrated into the university's core educational mission to construct a learning environment that integrates pedagogical knowledge and community life and provides opportunities for practical, hands-on participation (Suartha & Sari, 2013) & (Delanty,2001).

Purpose

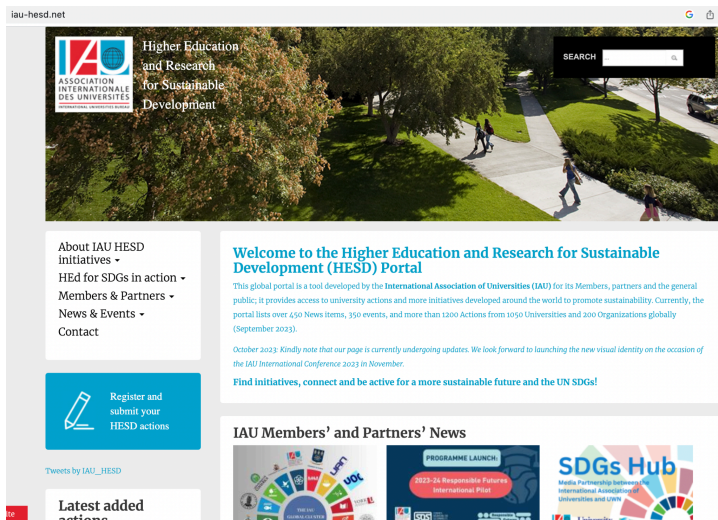
The purpose of this study is to obtain the mapping data , to understand the current practice and approaches on SDG related activities among UMAP members. The findings from this study is aimed to be incorporated into the UMAP SDG Taskforce future planning and strategy.

Problem Statements

Torres (2017) mentioned how SDGs are already incorporated in their courses and study programs however it is not explored in-depth. There is a need to boost the presence of SDGs in the academic curriculum of the university. Kanapathy et. al (2019) further stated that there is a need to enhance further teaching on SDGs as the awareness on SDGs is still lacking at HEIs. Thus this study tends to explore the level of knowledge and practice of SDGs among UMAP members.

The International Association of Universities (IAU) is an international association for higher education institutions and has been very active in highlighting SDG related information in their communication channels. UMAP needs to explore potential ways to communicate the activities done by member participants. Picture 1 is an example of the main SDG website on

IAU. The International Association of Universities Center for research in Sustainable Developments can be viewed at <https://www.iau-hesd.net/>



Picture 1: International Association of Universities

Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) has also been very active in showcasing the members and associations key SDG activities. Picture 1 shows an example of their SDG Projects.



Picture 2: Association of Pacific Rim Universities

This research provides opportunities for UMAP to understand more of the SDG activities conducted by the member countries and to also showcase the activities that have taken place to ensure there is an understanding of a cohesive meaning of SDG. The Association of Pacific Rim Universities web page on SDG can be viewed at <https://vse.apru.org/sdg4gc/>.

Objective of Study

The objective of this study is:

- 1- To identify the practices and approaches of HEIs in incorporating SDG related activities in their teaching and learning, research and engagement activities,
- 2- To explain issues and challenges faced by HEIs in co-ordinating SDG related activities in their respective institutions.
- 3- To make recommendations to the UMAP SDG Taskforce on the best model of practice based on the findings obtained.

The goal of the study is to find ways where universities within UMAP can learn from the best practices of one another and develop a UMAP approach towards incorporating SDG in HEIs.

Literature Review

Hirsu et al agreed that the work done by Bailey et al (2011) suggests there's a gap between the ambitions of policymakers and the reality of work at the university. Reyes (2018) provided evidence of the gap where the Philippine Normal University worked with disadvantaged and disempowered groups in Manila City without involving the city or industry partners. This is another example that there is a gap in mainstreaming the collaborative work from all supposedly involved parties in addressing the SDG in cities.

Neary & Osborne (2018) often mentioned that to ensure the success of SDG, the quadruple helix model of collaboration (the strong working relationship between industry, government, university, and civil society) is a must. Often, one party might be working closely with the other, and not so close/ an apparent gap with others. University often responds to the city issues, with the government following suit much later/ not close enough. The move to start collaborating and solidify the partnerships in the region was evident during the 14th SHARE Policy Dialogue (29 - 31 March 2022) where the regional higher education stakeholders from

Southeast Asia came together to engage on how they can work together and more cohesively on tackling SDGs. The dialogue is another evidence that the quadruple helix model of collaboration is crucial in tackling SDGs. The dialogue agreed that the process is ongoing and will be part of the EU SHARE program. During the dialogue, Libing Wang, chief of the section for educational innovation and skills development at the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok proposed that ‘partnerships between higher education is crucial given the interconnected nature of global and local challenges as well as the need to build a shared future.

HEIs play a significant role in contributing towards the SDGs. Leal Filho et al suggested that previous studies emphasized the importance of incorporating SDGs in four key areas of the institutions, namely, Teaching and Learning, Research and Development, Governance and campus operations and civic engagement and community outreach.

Torres (2017) mentioned how SDGs are already incorporated in their courses and study programs however it is not explored in-depth. There is a need to boost the presence of SDGs in the academic curriculum of the university. Kanapathy et. al (2019) further stated that there is a need to enhance further teaching on SDGs as the awareness on SDGs is still lacking at HEIs. The UMAP COIL Program in 2021 organized with Kansai University was a stepping stone of UMAP organizing an SDG related activity incorporating its member universities.



Diagram 2: University Impact Rankings

Working together as a strong network is important in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UMAP being a global association can play a significant role through the bridges it builds between institutions across the Asia Pacific to work together and collaborate in achieving this 2030 objective. However, the existence of university impact rankings as above in Diagram 2 can be seen as a counter collaborative move as universities are becoming more competitive to be positioned highly.

Mensah (2019) mentioned that many are still unclear of the meaning and history of the catchphrase 'sustainable development', as well as what it entails. (Mensah 2019) explained the catchphrase by combining aspects of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines and the Recursive Content Abstraction (RCA) analytical approach. Mensah (2019) argues that sustainable development revolves around the interconnected pillars of the environment, economy, and society, with a focus on both inter- and intragenerational equity. Decision-makers should always consider the relationships, complementarities, and trade-offs between these pillars, promoting responsible behavior at the international, national, community, and individual levels to support human development. Key players, including the United Nations (UN), governments, private sector, and civil society organizations, need to do more in terms of policies, education, and regulations for social, economic, and environmental resource management to ensure widespread awareness, consciousness, culture, and compliance with sustainable development.

Jorge et al. (2017) reviews literature on university social responsibility from 2000 to 2015, aiming to:

- 1) Examine where this literature is published.
- 2) Collect, analyze, and critique the current research in this field.
- 3) Identify any gaps in the existing literature and suggest areas for further research.

Over the past 30 years, universities have undergone significant changes in response to economic, political, and social shifts. These changes reflect the importance of universities as educators of future leaders and policymakers, emphasizing their societal role. As a result,

there is a need to incorporate social responsibility principles into the core functions of universities. To carry out this review, (Jorge et al. 2017) analyzed the data gathered from 15 specialized academic journals focused on higher education.

Abad-Segura et al. (2021) focuses on the sustainable economic development (SED) of higher education institutions (HEIs) between 1990 and 2018. It aims to explore the global trends in scientific research related to SED in HEIs. The Key findings include the Journal of Industrial Ecology and the Journal of Cleaner Production as major publishers, with the United States, China, and the United Kingdom being the top contributing countries.

Abad-Segura et al. (2021) finds that the primary research themes over this period include sustainable development, environmental impact, economy, education, and recycling. Future research directions involve creating indicators to help academic institutions assess the economic aspect of sustainability. This study provides various perspectives for evaluating HEIs in terms of SED to ensure positive impacts on economic, social, and environmental dimensions in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Nardo et al. (2021) uses a qualitative approach and content analysis on 20 strategic plans from large and mega Italian universities. The analysis is based on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the United Nations 2030 Agenda, resulting in 17 categories and 103 key symbols.

Nardo et al. (2021) indicate that Italian public universities have limited emphasis on social responsibility in their planning documents, particularly in terms of environmental concerns. This lack of focus hinders the implementation and attainment of University Social Responsibility. However, some universities exhibit a greater awareness of social responsibility in their planning documents, suggesting a more advanced level of commitment to sustainability in their institutional planning.

Recent scientific reports underscore the pressing necessity for changes in order to attain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensure sustainability in the long run. Supporting the said argument, Horan(2019) discovered a new approach to partnerships,

"transformation effectiveness" as a criterion to assess partnerships and "pathways" to frame discussions about the partnerships required. The bottom-up approach as suggested by Horan(2019) revealed a potential misalignment between the partnerships needed for transformation and those arising from the current dominant voluntary approach, suggesting that the model may address some but not all of the needed partnerships. Attention was brought to five particular difficulties: Providing compensation for potential losers, Bolstering partnering capabilities, Lengthening time horizons, refining coordination mechanisms, and aligning incentives appropriately.

The possible policy measures to strengthen the framework of the partnership required for SDG transformations are manifold. Horan (2019) emphasized these key areas which include transfers, regulatory actions, and public investments, as means through which governments could fortify the bottom-up framework and address the deficiencies in partnerships.

In 2004, Campbell et al agreed that climate change emerged as an ever more pressing global challenge in the realm of global education which underpins the argument that international mobility is now perceived as a contributor to worldwide carbon emissions. Interestingly enough, this could not refute the fact that the potential for students to acquire skills and knowledge to address climate change can be made possible through international mobility. As gauged through a qualitative study, Campbell et al wrote that international education practitioners perceived climate change both as a threat and an opportunity for the field that sheds light on the emotional challenges and ethical dilemmas faced by professionals in the field. Notably, interviewees pointed out the complexities in logically and ethically reconciling the interplay between international education and climate change, especially in the context of student mobility. Despite the obstacles, the education practitioners cited various justifications for expanding international education to promote social and environmental justice and underscored the necessity of adopting a new approach by giving emphasis on increased virtual interactions and reduced air travel as a response to diminishing the environmental impact of international education. These statements can be enlarged to state that the push towards virtuality may act as a catalyst to achieve sustainability in the area of international student mobility in higher education institutions (HEIs), thus enabling

international education to work together and in tandem in accessing and coming up with possible and potential avenues for addressing climate change.

Gutema et al (2023) acknowledged that the global higher education ecosystem has observed a vigorous trend in international student mobility over the past years as individuals worldwide respond to the opportunities presented seeking diverse academic experiences and opportunities for cross-cultural learning. To support this statement, a systematic literature review study employed by Gutema et al (2023) aims to examine the prevailing trends, research directions, and central themes in this body of literature that offers a comprehensive insight into the factors that shape international students' decisions to pursue higher education and future career prospects overseas by maneuvering the push-pull factor model as a framework. Encompassing 43 publications spanning the years 2010 to 2022, the adherent to the PRISMA framework's inclusion and exclusion criteria has unveiled five prominent themes within scholarly discussions, categorized as: Improving one's quality of life Host country policies, Institutional roles, Returning to one's home country and A wide array of social, economic, environmental, individual, and cultural factors.

The findings underscore the significance of various elements, including the quality of education, visa requirements, academic reputation, tuition costs, scholarship availability, job prospects, and a multitude of social, economic, environmental, individual, and cultural factors. Gutema et al mentioned that the study also identifies significant hurdles and obstacles to international students' ability to remain in their host country after graduation among which are language barriers, visa regulations, and challenges in social integration. The insights derived from this study are poised to make a valuable contribution to a deeper understanding of the primary factors that influence international students' choices to pursue their education abroad.

In 2021, Ramaswamy et al wrote that higher education institutions (HEIs) play a critical role in disseminating the knowledge essential for addressing the intricate global issues confronting contemporary society. Every so often this role is linked with the concept of internationalization in HEIs, although, in reality, oftentimes criticized. Among the new proposed potential solutions to improve society and to transform institutions is through the

integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations into the teaching and learning functions, partnerships, research, and discovery functions of institutions, to name a few.

The surge of SDGs is seen as an important factor in the internationalization of higher education for the betterment of society. Ramaswamy et al (2021) agreed that by aligning internationalization with the SDGs, HEIs can potentially transform themselves and contribute to global betterment. Ramaswamy et al (2021) demonstrated links between internationalization and the SDGs, imparting examples of initiatives worldwide that have influenced societal discussions. In support of the studies, Ramaswamy et al (2021) argued that consolidating these concepts can empower HEIs to effectively address the global challenge of creating a more inclusive world.

Methodology

The study was conducted using both a quantitative and a qualitative study. The first study was through the distribution of surveys. The survey was distributed through the national secretariat. The International Secretariat UMAP Canada, had distributed an e-mail containing the details of the survey to all the national secretariat and the national secretariat distributed them to each respective member within the secretariat. Based on the UMAP website, there are a total of 502 members and a total of 25 national secretariats. From the survey, we had received a total of 171 completed responses which is around 34.06% of the total members in UMAP. It is important to take note that the membership based on national secretariats differ in size. Some national secretariats have more than 90 members while some far less. The range of membership is from Australia, with only one member to Taiwan that has 92 members.

The survey was divided into 5 key sections which were:

Profile and Demographics

Knowledge, Understanding and Practice

Implementation

Communication

UMAP & SDGs

The survey was later followed up with an interview session with ten representatives from UMAP members. The interview was either conducted with the national secretariat or whoever the national secretariat deemed to be the best suitable candidate to answer issues on SDG related to their specific countries. It is important to note that national secretariats in UMAP can be from Ministry bodies or even specific higher education institutions. The questions are focused on the practice and challenges of executing SDG programs.

Findings: Survey Data

Respondents Area of Origin

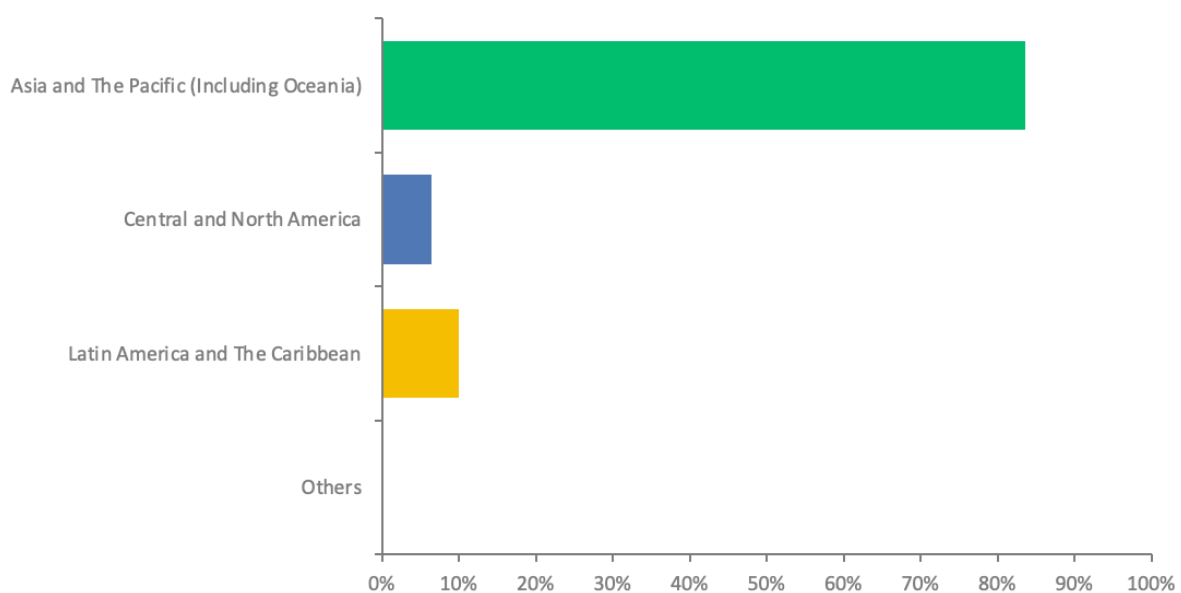


Diagram 3: Respondents Area of Origin

A total of 171 surveys were collected from the study. Diagram 3 highlights the respondents area of origin. Out of the total respondents, 83.62% are from Asia and the Pacific while 9.94% are from Latin America and the Caribbean while another 6.43% are from Central and North America. Most of the UMAP members are based in Asia and the Pacific in comparison to the other two regions. Data was obtained from 17 out of the 25 member countries. The survey was forwarded to the respective national secretariats and it was their responsibility

to further cascade the survey to the member participants within their respective countries. The most respondents were from Taiwan, Philippines and Malaysia.

Respondents Department

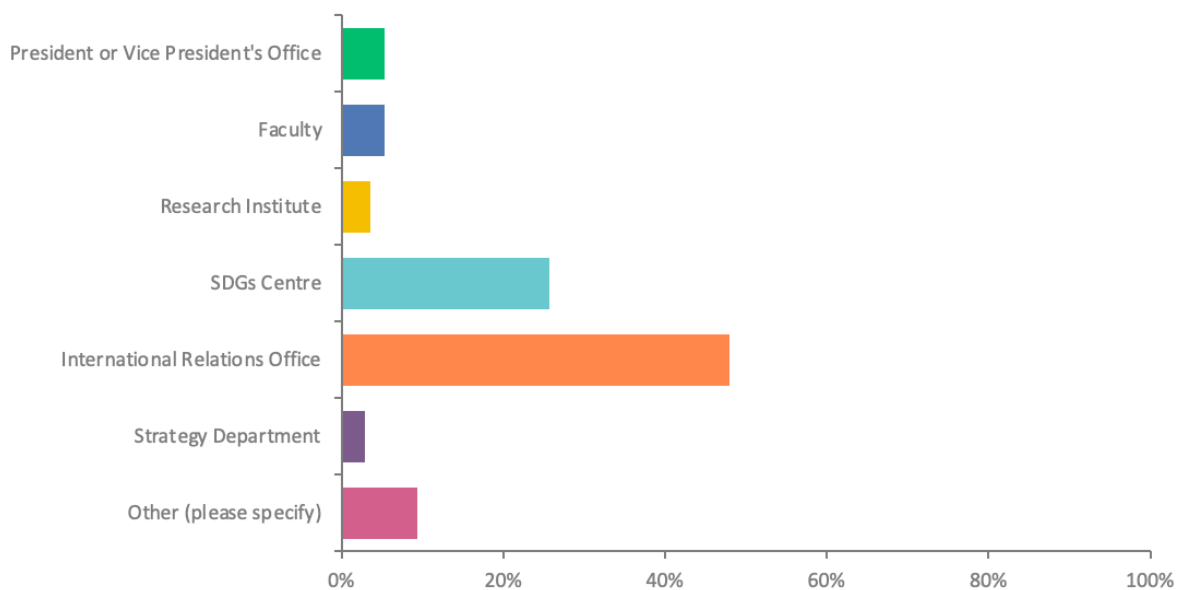


Diagram 4: Respondents Department

Out of the 171 respondents. A total of 47.95% of the respondents came from the International Relations Office. Around 25.73% were representatives from SDG centers. These were the two most significant respondents in the department that answered the survey questions. The others are quite spread out between the President's office, Faculty and also research institutes. There were also other departments that had respondents such as Campus Director Office, College of Arts, Sciences and Education, Global, Mobility and Social services and also Quality, Accreditation and Evaluation. This shows that there are a diverse form of departments that handle the SDG agenda in the different institutions. This survey was specifically requested to be answered by the person in charge of SDG.

Respondents Position

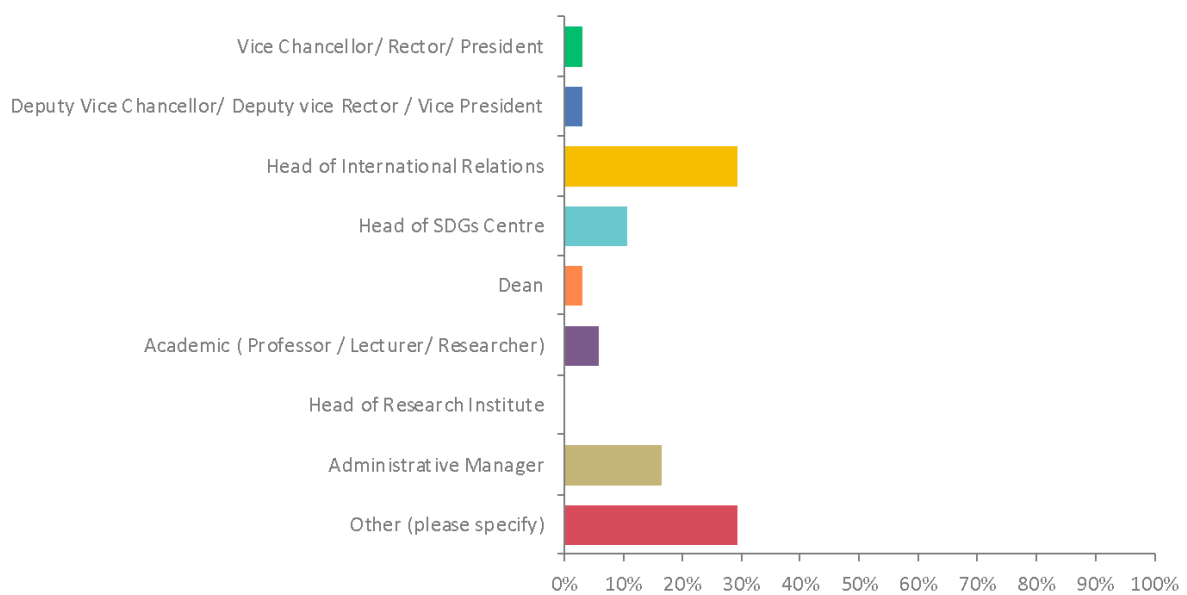


Diagram 5: Respondents Position

When asking the higher education institutions on their overall understanding of sustainable development goals, 46.2% strongly agreed to the statement while another 45.61% agreed. This is a strong indication of the high-level understanding of sustainable development goals within UMAP members. 6.43% stated that they neither agree nor disagree indicating that they are unaware of the situation in their respective institutions. Only 1.75% disagreed with the statement. In general, members of UMAP believe that their institutions have a strong overall understanding of SDGs.

The next section focuses on the three key components of environmental , economic and social sustainability. We provided the definition of the key terms as it is the basis and

foundation of the SDGs. It is important to explore whether the respondents understood the definition of these three concepts.

Knowledge on Environmental Sustainability

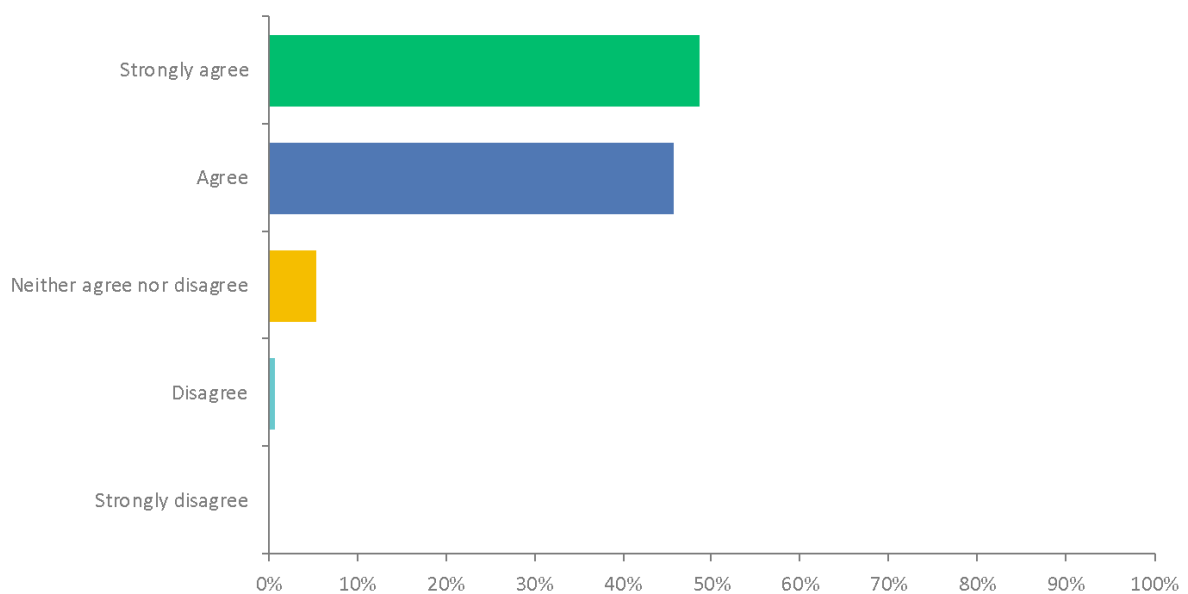


Diagram 6: Knowledge on Environmental Sustainability

The concept of environmental sustainability is about the natural environment and how it remains productive and resilient to support human life. Environmental sustainability relates to ecosystem integrity and carrying capacity of the natural environment (Brodhag & Taliere, 2006). It requires that natural capital be sustainably used as a source of economic inputs and as a sink for waste (Goodland & Daly, 1996). The implication is that natural resources must be harvested no faster than they can be regenerated while waste must be emitted no faster than they can be assimilated by the environment (Diesendorf, 2018, Evers, 2018)). - Page 10, Mensah (2021)

When asked about whether their institutions have a strong understanding of environmental sustainability, 48.54% strongly agreed that their institutions have a strong understanding of environmental stability. While another 45.61% stated that they agree with the statement. Only 5.26% neither agree or disagree.

Knowledge on Economic Sustainability

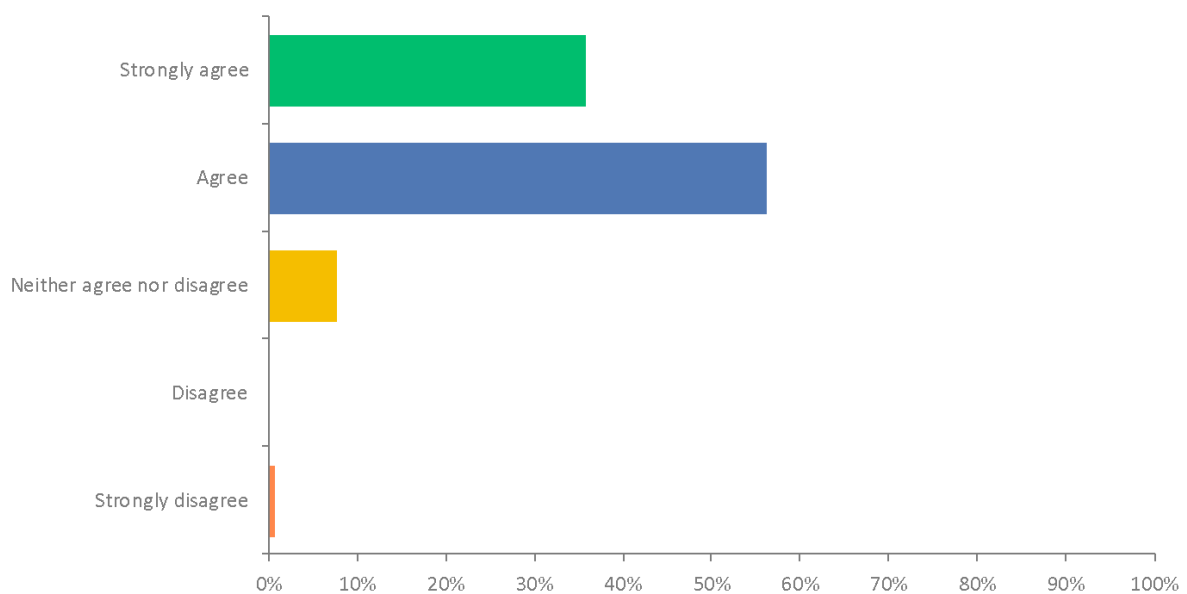


Diagram 7: Knowledge on Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability implies a system of production that satisfies present consumption levels without compromising future needs (Lobo, Pietriga, & Appert, 2015)...Economic sustainability, therefore, requires that decisions are made in the most equitable and fiscally sound way possible, while considering the other aspects of sustainability (Zhai & Chang, 2019)) - Page 9 , Mensah (2019).

When asked about whether their respective institutions have a strong understanding of economic sustainability, 56.14% agreed that most institutions do while 35.67% strongly agreed to the statement. Though in general the understanding of both environmental and

economic sustainability are generally positive. The understanding of environmental sustainability is still greater than the understanding of economic sustainability.

Knowledge on Social Sustainability

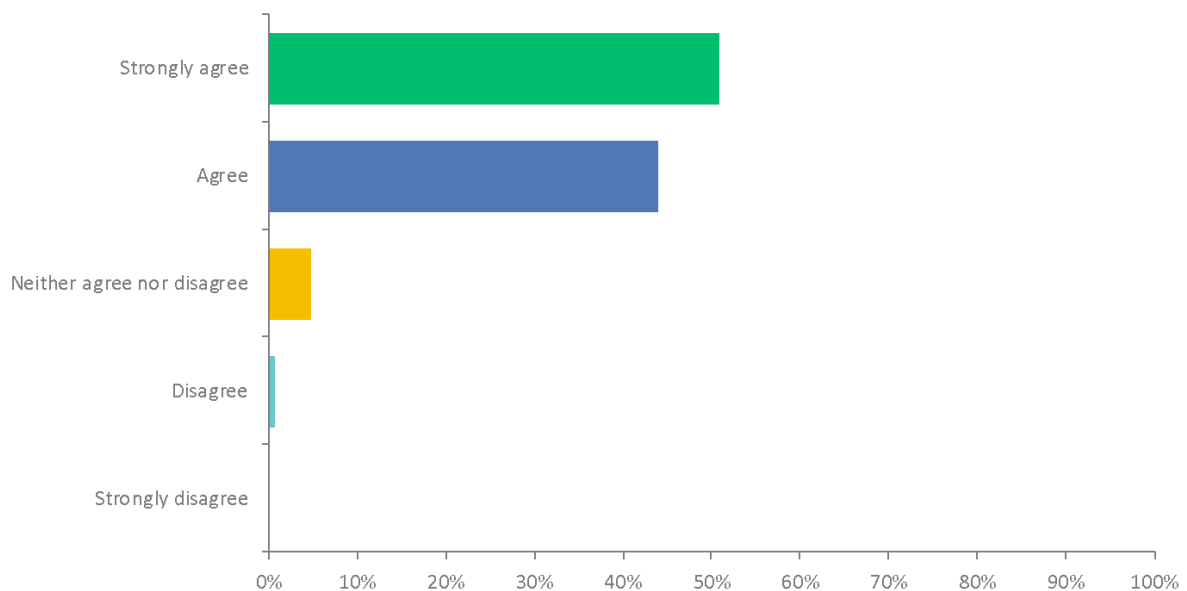


Diagram 8: Knowledge on Social Sustainability

Social sustainability encompasses notions of equity, empowerment, accessibility, participation, cultural identity and institutional stability (Daly,1992). The concept implies that people matter since development is about people (Benaim & Raftis, 2008)). - Page 9 , Mensah (2019). In the context of social sustainability, 50.88% stated that they strongly agree that their respective institutions have a strong understanding of social sustainability while another 43.86% stated that they agree with the statement. Again this shows that a majority of the UMAP members have strong understanding on the social sustainability component of sustainability.

5Ps of SDG

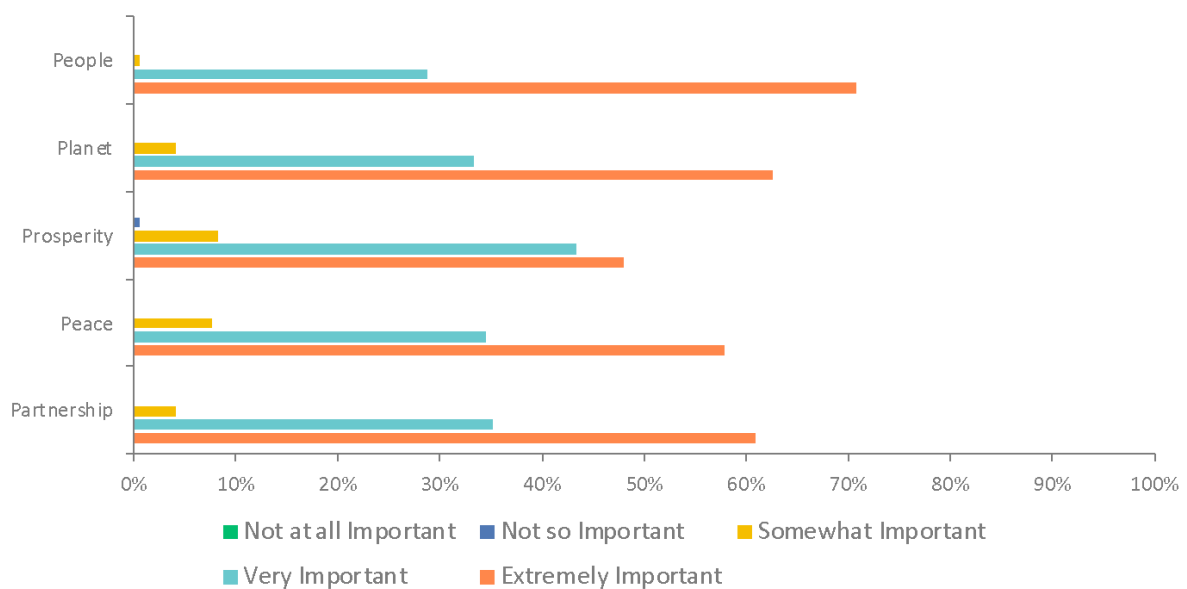


Diagram 9: 5Ps of SDG

The United Nations Sustainable Group has listed down the 5Ps of SDGs which incorporate the 17 SDGs themes into 5 key components. The 5Ps are People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. Respondents were asked how they would rate the importance of each P for their respective institutions and generally, 70.7% stated that people were of extreme importance followed by the planet and 62.57% and Partnerships at 60.82%. The ones that were categorized of a lesser importance are peace at 57.89% and prosperity at 47.95%.

Implementation

This section of the survey focuses on the implementation of SDGs related activities among UMAP members within their respective institutions.

Strategic Action Plan

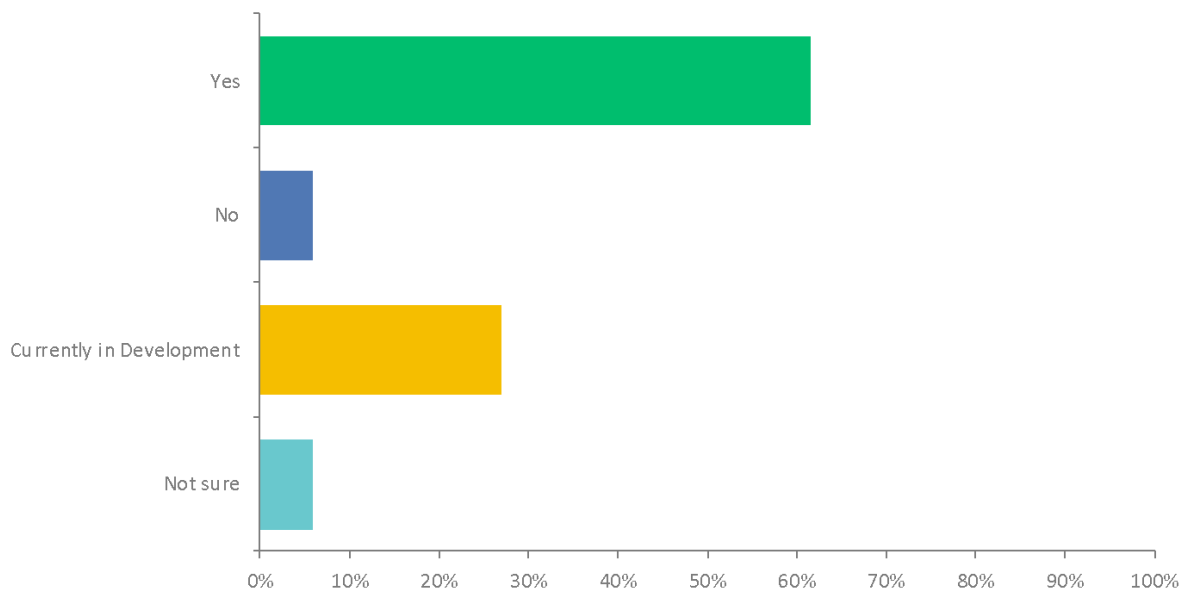


Diagram 10: Strategic Action Plan

In terms of having an SDG action plan or strategy, 61% of the respondents answered that they have an SDG action plan in their institution. At 26.9% stated that the strategic plan is currently in development. Equally 5% of the respondents stated that they do not have an action plan and also they are unsure whether their respective universities have one. In general, this shows that most UMAP members are very prepared and are incorporating SDGs as part of their strategic planning. The high numbers of those that are currently in development further strengthens that more universities are taking this matter seriously as part of the key focus of their respective universities.

Structure of SDG in Institution

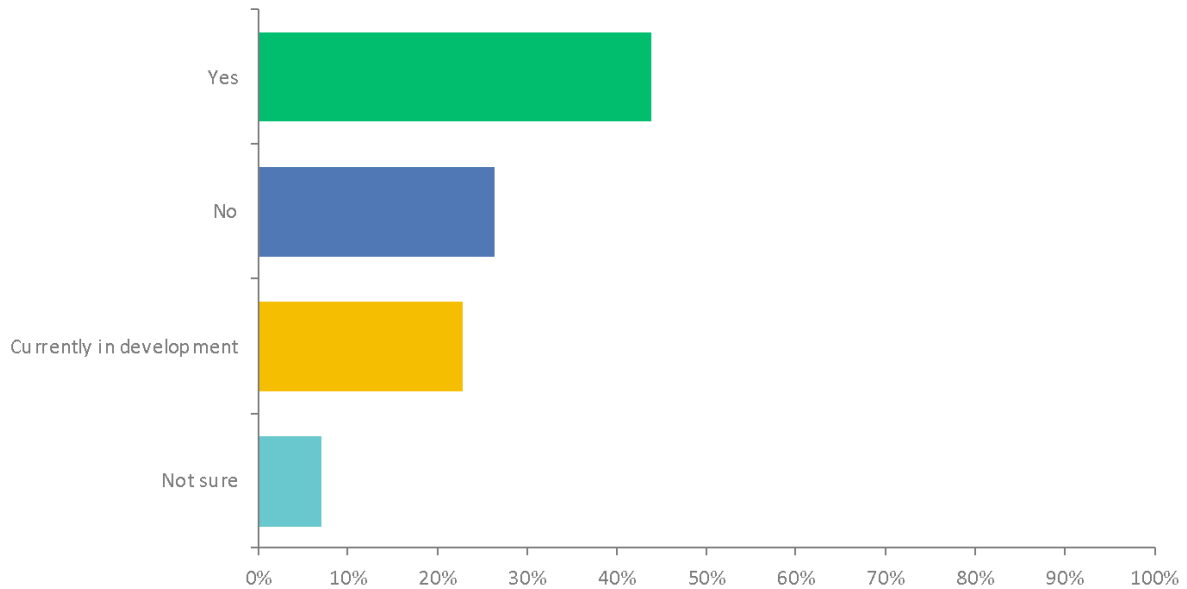


Diagram 11: Structure of SDG in Institutions

In the context of having a standalone SDG center within the campus, 43.85% stated that there is a specific SDG center in their institution and another 22.81% stated that they are currently in development. 26.32% of the institutions stated that there are no SDG centers in their institutions while another 7.02% are unsure if they have a specific SDG center. Higher Education Institutions tend to vary in terms of having a structure of organization and how SDG is being managed in their respective institutions. It depends on human resources, budget and how data and information are being organized in the respective institutions. There is also not necessarily a right way of organizing SDG institutions. It follows through the capabilities and competence of each respective university. Though having a specific center may seem to be an ideal approach, it depends on how each university is able to manage them respectively.

Responsibility of SDG

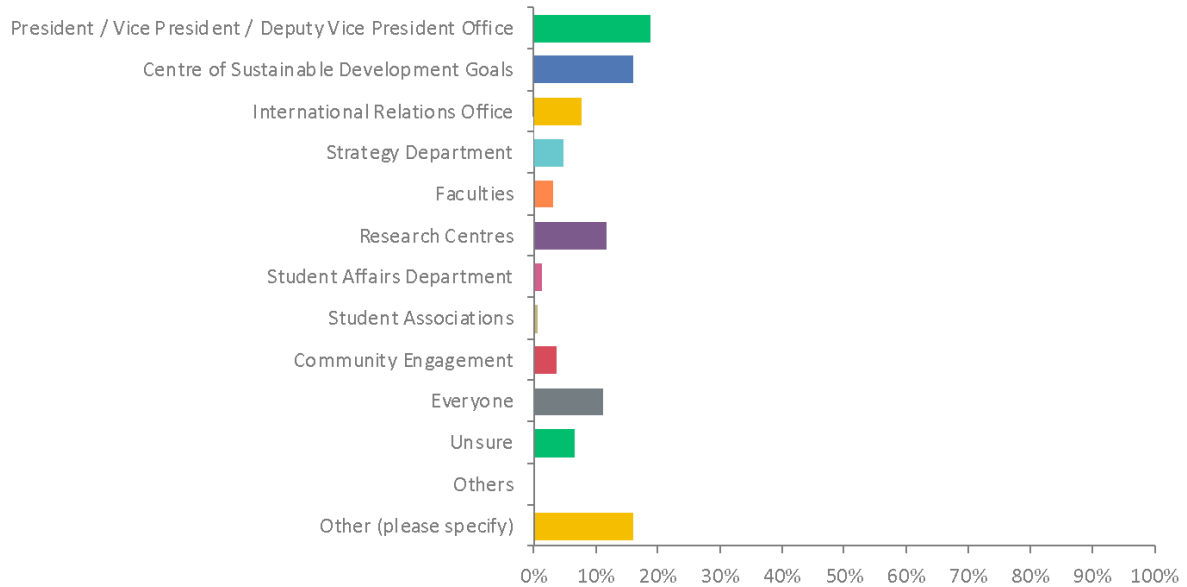


Diagram 12: Responsibility of SDG

It is interesting to note that there is a strong emphasis on leadership roles and positions in organizing SDGs related activities. Even with SDG Centres established, most departments that are put in charge of SDGs are actually the President and Vice President's office at 32% followed by 15.79% that is held by the respective SDG centers. This is followed by Research Centres third at 11.7%. This shows that SDG is highly regarded and positioned in terms of importance. The placement to the Presidents and Vice President's office indicate how this agenda is among the top priority agenda of the university. Some institutions have put the responsibility to be in charge of SDG to the research center emphasizing the importance of research and innovation in upholding this agenda.

Q15

SDG Activities in Institutions

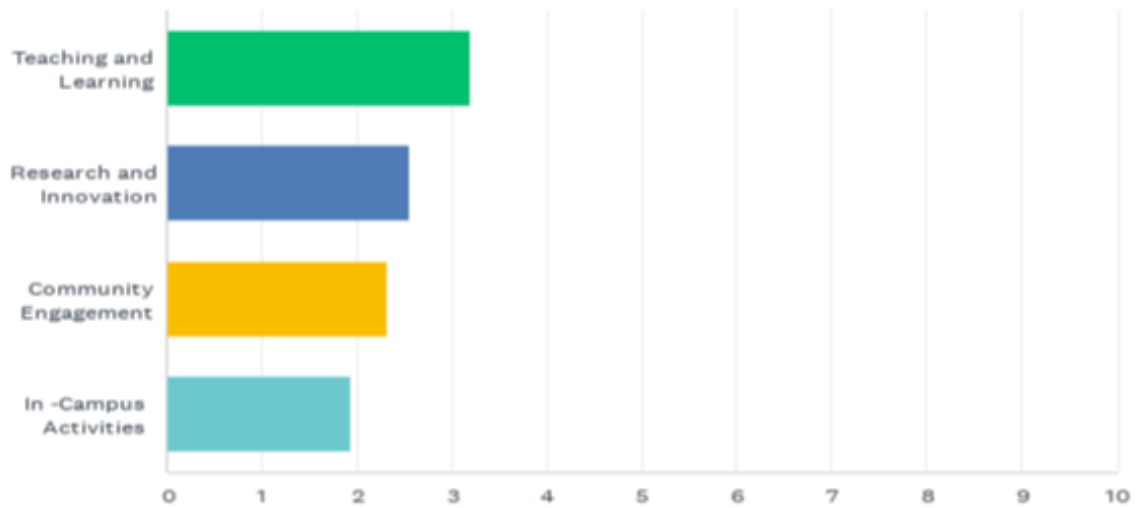


Diagram 13: SDG Activities in Institutions

Institutions ranked teaching and learning at 46.20% as the most important way of incorporating SDG within the university eco-system. This was followed by research and innovation at 29.24%, Community engagement at 16.96% and in-campus activities at 7.6%. A majority of the institutions felt that incorporating SDG into teaching and learning is the best approach to instill sustainable understanding and behavior. Research was placed second and this is supported earlier as some SDG related activities are placed under the research departments.

Most Important SDGs in Institutions

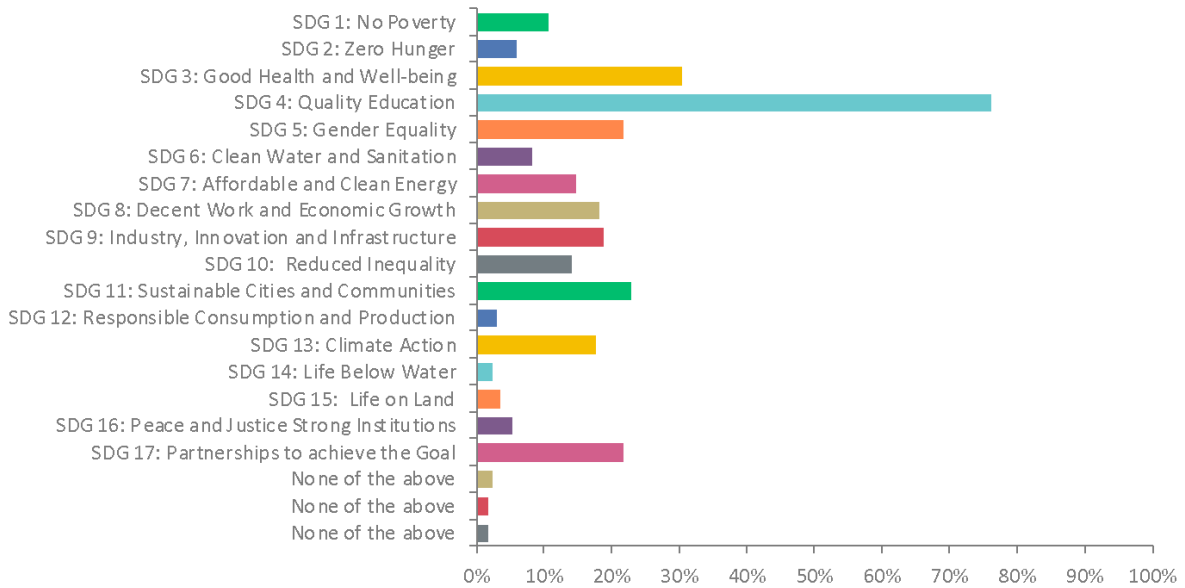


Diagram 14: Most Important SDGs in Institutions

As UMAP consists of higher education institutions as its key members, it is no doubt that Quality Education is placed highest in terms of importance among all the 17 SDGs. Each institution was required to provide the three most important SDGs that are incorporated in their respective institutions. 76.02% placed Quality Education as their main priority. This was followed with the 3rd SDG which is Good Health and Well-Being at 30.41% and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities at 22.81%. On the other hand 1.75% of the respondents stated that none of the goals were categorized as important to their institutions. The least important goals were categorized as SDG14: Life Below Water, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production and SDG 15: Life on Land. Though these three rank the lowest, it does not mean that it is of no importance at all. It is just not categorized as the three most important for the institutions.

International Student Mobility and SDG

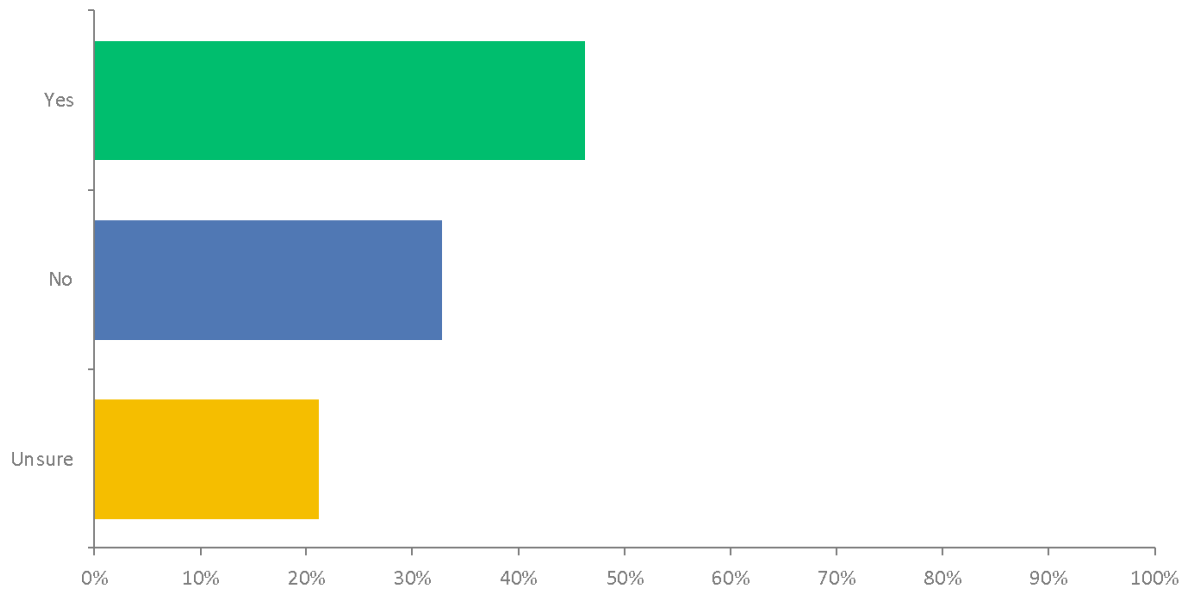


Diagram 15: International Student Mobility and SDG

The next part focuses on whether students who attend international mobility programs are required to find programs that are SDG related. 46.2% stated that yes, it is a requirement for students to participate in SDG related mobility programs . This shows the institutions focus in ensuring that students obtain knowledge and understanding of SDG through their international mobility and engagements. This could also open up students' perspective and understanding through comparative analysis with practices in their host countries. Still, a high number of institutions do not have the same practice where SDG is not a criteria for mobility. Quite a high number of percentages were also unsure about their institution policy on sending students for mobility. 21.05% were unsure whether their university has any specific requirements. This could be the fact that mobility and SDG is handled by separate departments however this is also an area of potential improvement for internal communication within the various departments.

Internship and SDG

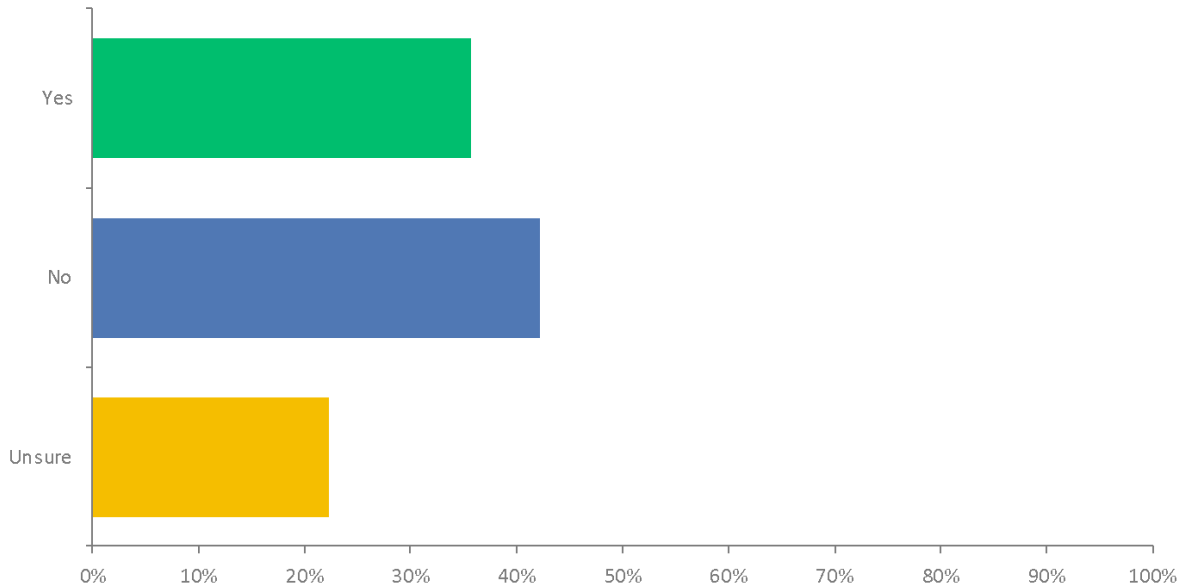


Diagram 16: Internship and SDG

In answering whether internship programs are required to be related to organizations that focus on the SDG agenda, a majority 42.11% stated that their institution does not follow that practice. Only 35.67% of institutions require students to find internships at organizations that focus on the SDG agenda. Another 22.22% of institutions are unsure whether there is a requirement for that. Again, this may echo the situation with mobility as it may involve different departments handling internship and SDG. Again there is a need to improve internal communication in ensuring a successful implementation if such a policy exists.

Funding of SDG at Institutions

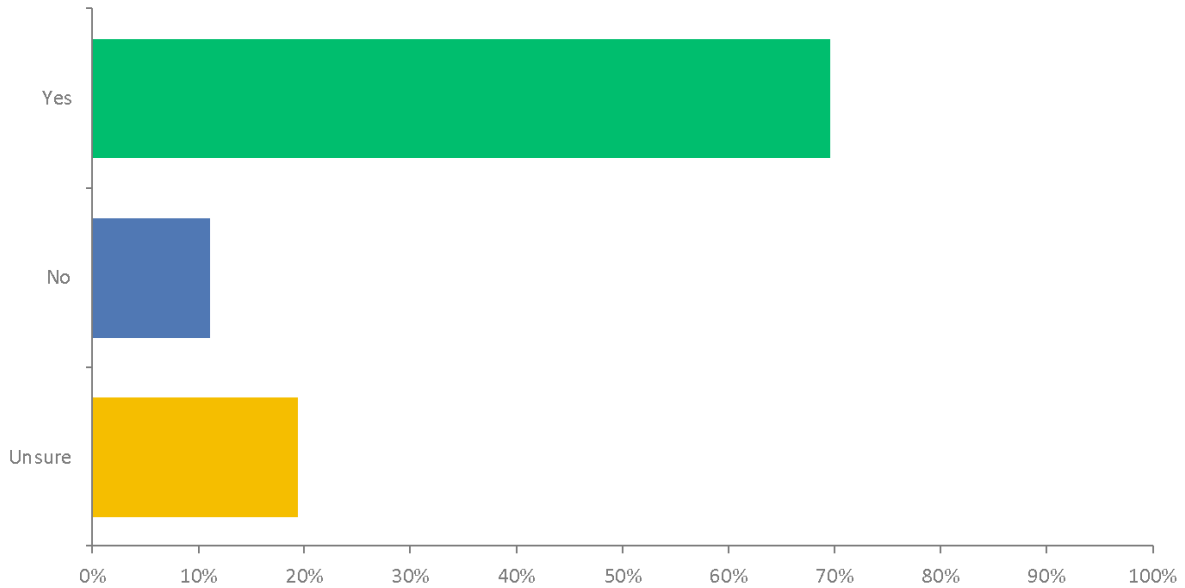


Diagram 17: Funding of SDG at Institutions

Funding and budget allocations are important in ensuring a successful SDG activity into the university eco-system. 69.59% stated that there is an allocation of funding provided for SDG activities. 11.11% stated that they do not receive any fundings in organizing SDG activities. A total of 19.30% are unsure whether there are any budget allocations. This is interesting as almost 1/5 are unsure whether there are any fundings. Funding is important to ensure programs can be organized successfully. However, the high number of uncertainty can lead to an under utilization of resources especially if there are available fundings in the institutions. Again it is important to ensure effective communication within an organization.

It is important to also understand why institutions engage in SDG activities. The institutions were required to choose three most important reasons. A leading 72.51% stated that their aim is to advance knowledge and to educate the future generations which is of a core importance of the SDG. Another 47.95% stated that it is to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while another 43.27% stated that it is for research and innovation. It is very clear that institutions are very focused on ensuring that SDG is for the long term and focused towards improving knowledge and understanding. The reasons that were not of a high priority include to influence policy at 2.92% and also for institutional global ranking at 12.87%. Most institutions are focused on the SDG agenda rather than how the SDG can create impact towards policy or branding.

Challenges in Implementation of SDG at Institutions

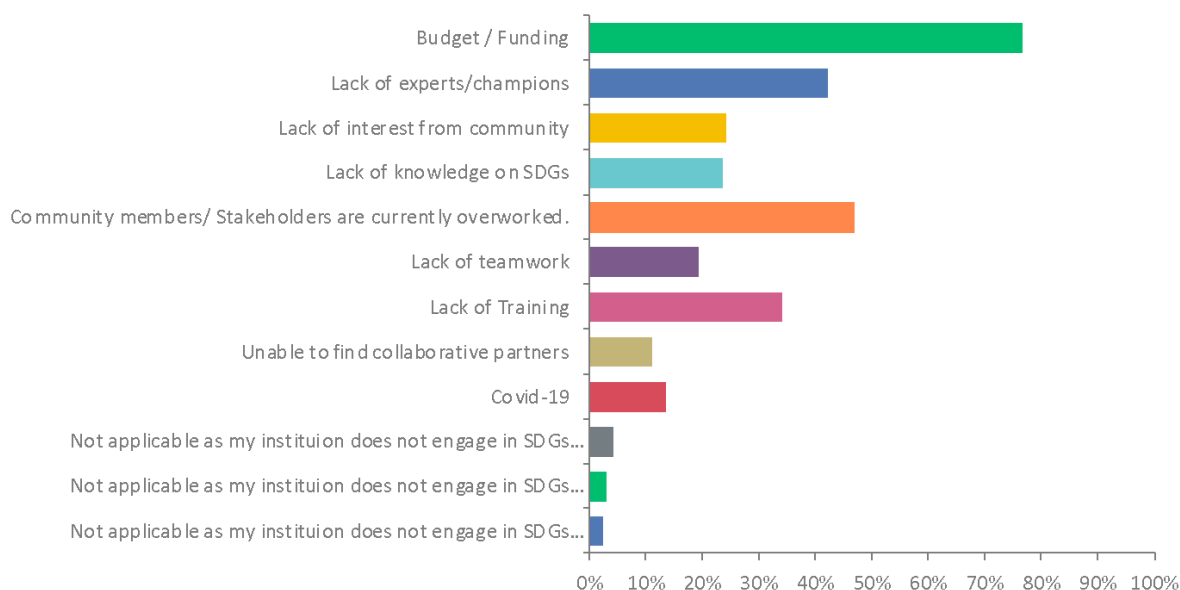


Diagram 18: Challenges in Implementation of SDG at Institutions

Monetary support has been categorized as the biggest challenge faced by institutions in implementing SDG related activities. Respondents were required to choose three biggest challenges from a list provided. 76.61% put funding and Budget as the biggest challenge. This was followed with overworked community members and stakeholders at 46.78% and lastly a lack of experts or champions to lead issues within the SDG scope. This echoes the situation highlighted earlier when there are institutions that are operating without fundings for SDG or are unsure whether they have any. Things that institutions need to take note off is also on the overworked members as there are many issues and agendas highlighted at the institutional level, and SDG adds on more work to already a full plate. There is a need to explore the potential and strategy on how to incorporate SDG without burdening the staff and team members. Lack of experts is also a challenge. The UMAP platform would be fully utilized. It should create a ground for exchange of experts , for sharing sessions and opportunity towards capacity building.

Monitoring and Evaluation of SDG

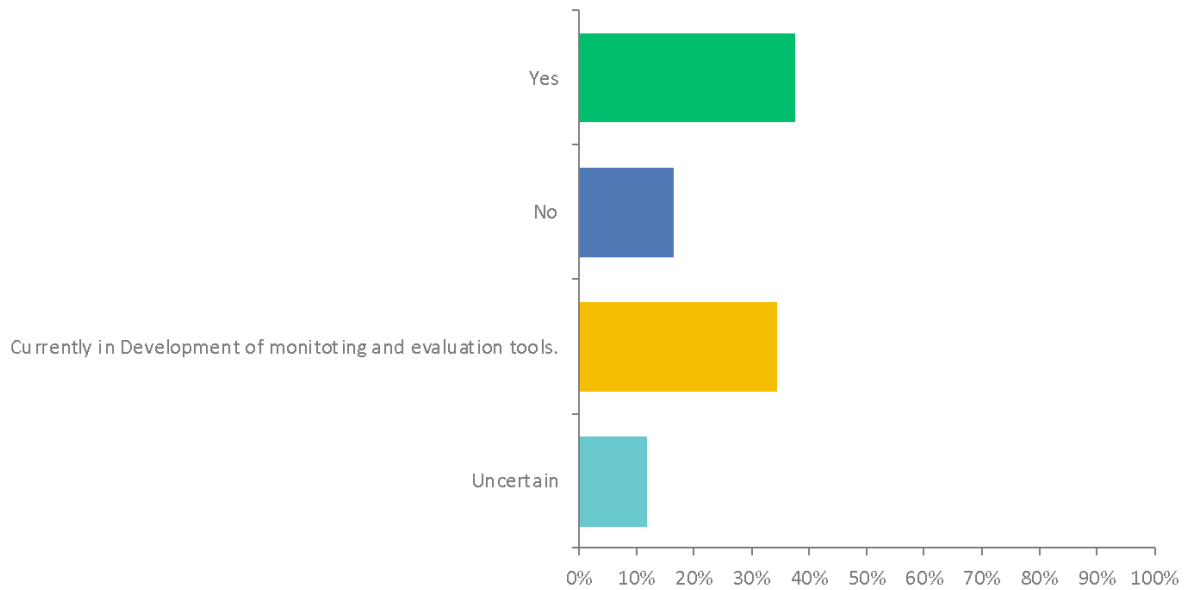


Diagram 19: Monitoring and Evaluation of SDG

The success of SDG activities can only be measured through having successful monitoring and evaluation tools. 37.43% of respondents stated that they are equipped with monitoring and evaluation tools in monitoring the success of the SDG implementation. A high number of 34.5% stated that they are currently in development of monitoring tools. This is definitely a positive sign as more universities feel the need to be able to measure the impact of the incorporation of SDG into the university system. Another 16.37% stated that there were no monitoring and evaluation tools while 11.7% are uncertain whether they have any.

COMMUNICATION

The focus on this section is to see whether there is a strong communication flow on SDG within the institutions. We would like to explore how messages are being conveyed, how training is being provided and how information is being communicated.

Information of SDG at Institutions

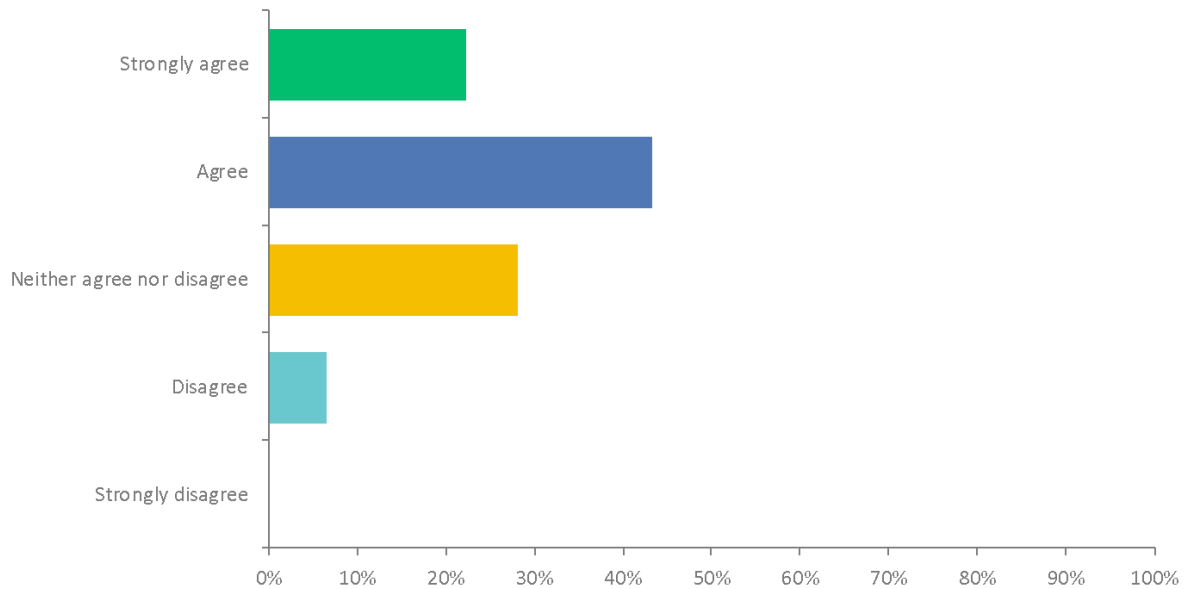


Diagram 20: Information of SDG at Institutions

When the respondents were asked whether their respective institutions provide a lot of valuable information on SDG to the staff members, 43.27% agreed to the statement while a smaller 22.22% stated that they strongly agree. The numbers for being uncertain, of either agreeing or disagreeing is very high at 28.07% which is even more than those that strongly agree. 6.43% stated that they disagree that their institution provided them valuable information on SDG. In ensuring that the message of incorporating the SDG agenda is effectively conveyed within the institution, it is important that there must be a proper SDG communication strategy on sharing of internal and external messages.

Staff Capacity Building on SDG

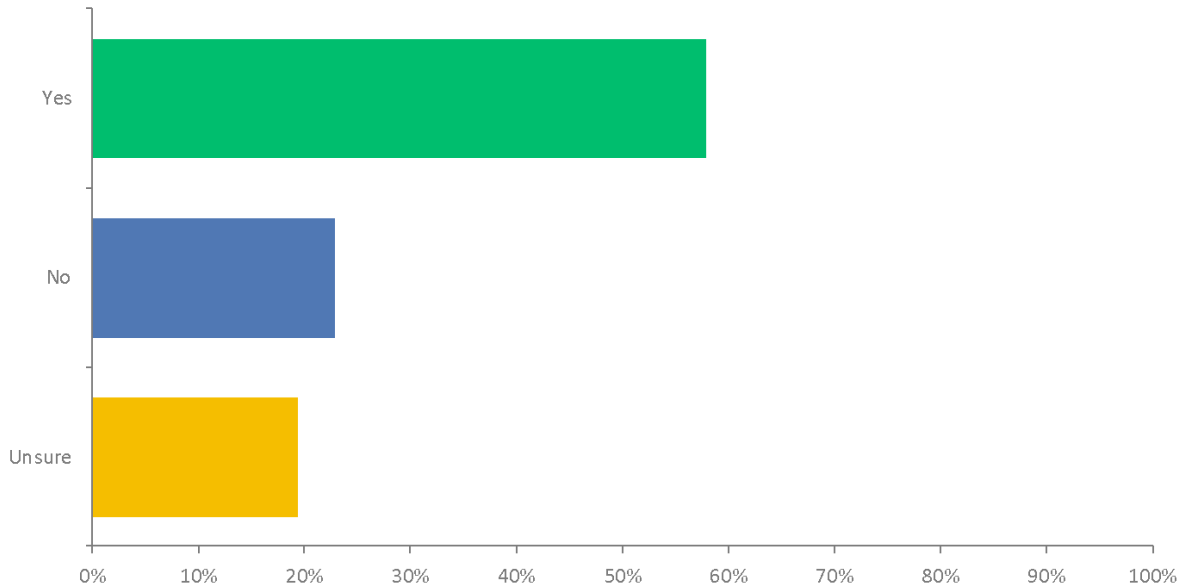


Diagram 21: Staff Capacity Building on SDG

Providing capacity building Trainings or Workshop on SDG are important and it provides a positive impact to the staff members. 57.89% of the respondents stated that they provide capacity building training to the staff members . Quite a relatively high number of 22.81% stated that they do not provide capacity building training for their staff while around 19.30% were unsure whether that is being offered. There is a need to streamline a capacity building training program. Maybe UMAP can lead this sector and ensure that the SDG message is consistent across the secretariats. This will allow for UMAP to play a leading role in communicating the message to other counterparts.

Student Capacity Building on SDG

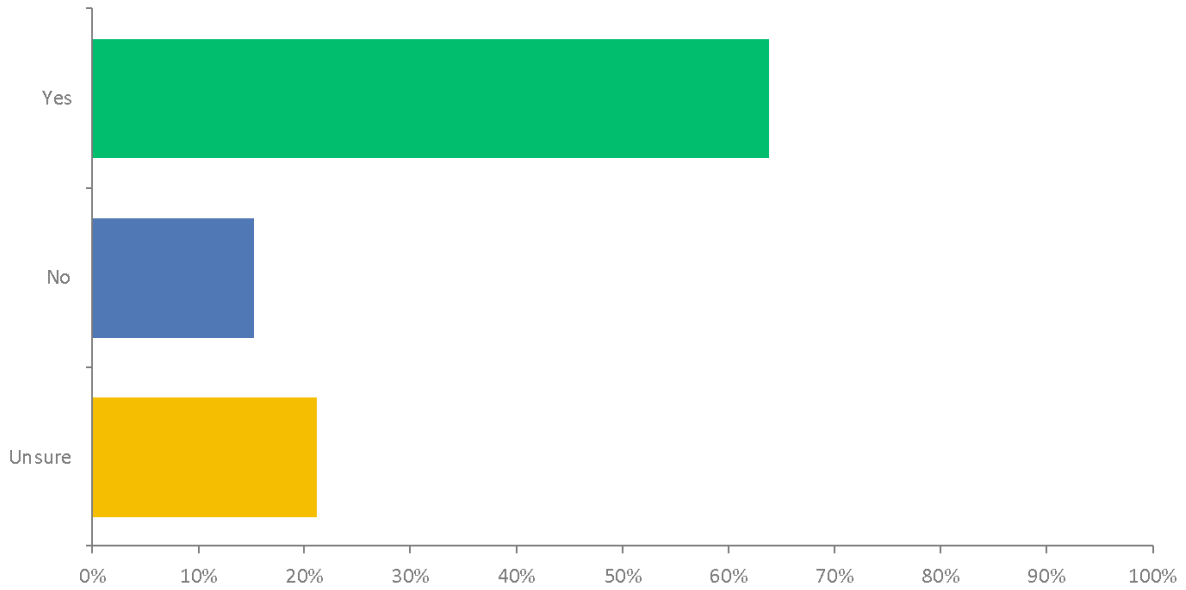


Diagram 22: Student Capacity Building on SDG

In terms of capacity building training for students, the pattern is almost similar to those that are provided to staff members. 63.74% confirms that training programs are provided to students. However a total of 21.05% were unsure of whether any training was provided while a total of 15.20% mentioned that they do not provide any capacity building training. There is a potential where UMAP can organize modules suitable for UMAP members to guide them in terms of providing training to the key communities of their institutions.

Channels of Communication for SDG

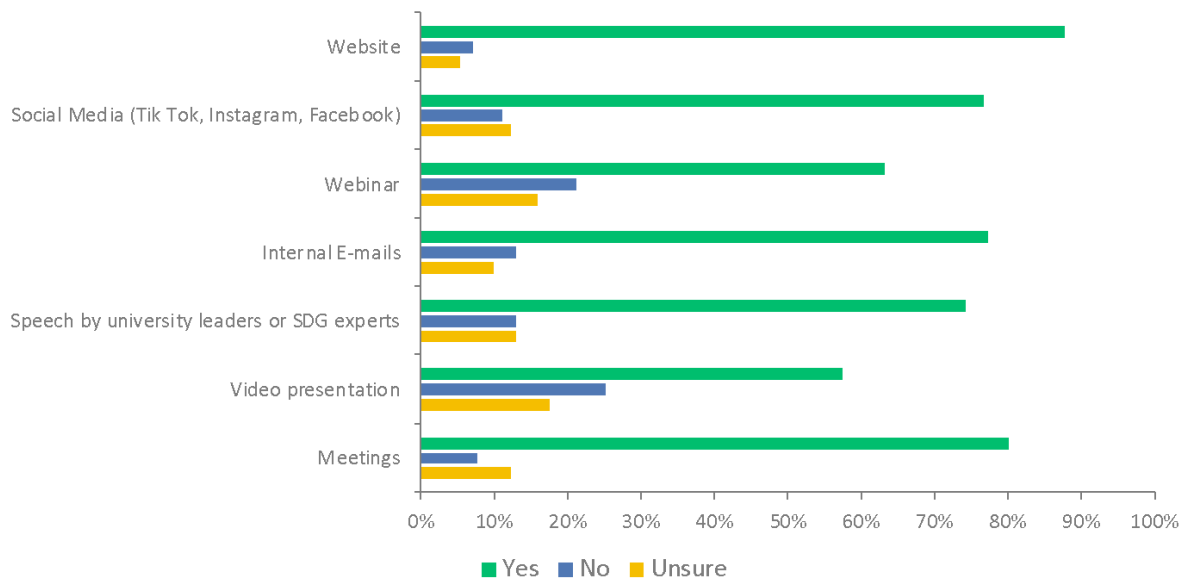


Diagram 23: Channels of Communication for SDG

In general , institutions disseminate and share information using various channels and mediums of communication. Website ranks among the highest followed by meetings, internal emails and social media content. What is worth noting is that many are unsure what the mode of communication that shares information in their institution is. The range is about 5% to almost 18% uncertainty from the respondents. Video presentations and Webinars are the least channels that are used to disseminate the information. These two approaches are quite relevant in this day and age especially post Covid-19 with more emphasis on the context of digitalization. Possibly, institutions may require assistance in the development of these forms of communication within their respective institutions.

Ministry Directives on SDG

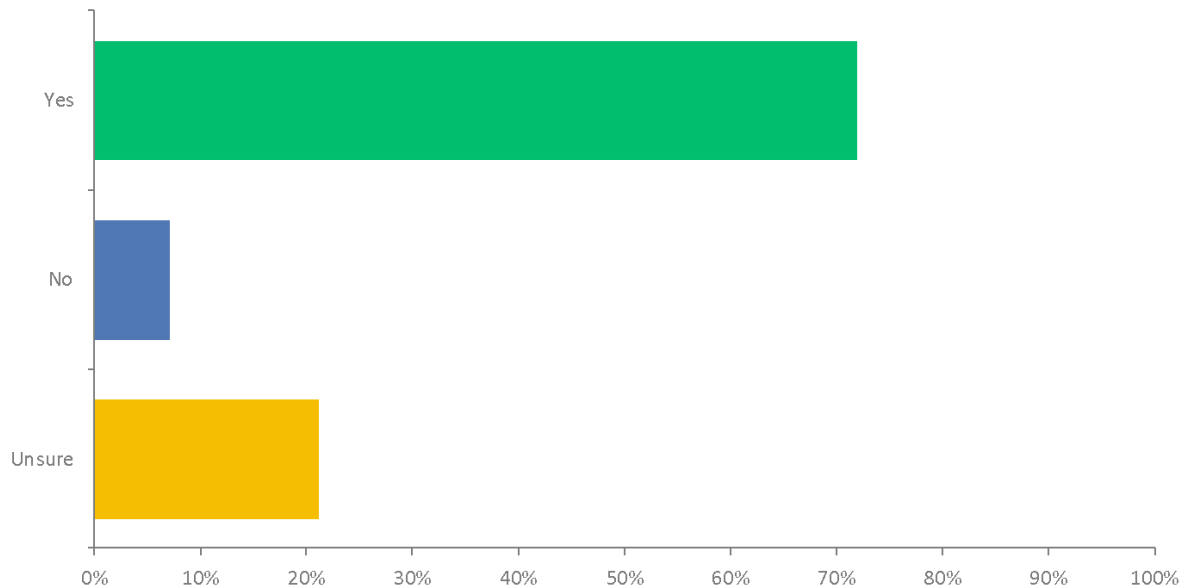


Diagram 24: Ministry Directives on SDG

The role of the Ministry of Education/ Higher Education has been key in institutions adapting SDGs into their institutions activities such as teaching and learning, research and innovation, community engagement and other-in-campus activities. A high number of 71.93% stated that the respective Ministries in their home country issues directives to the institutions to incorporate SDGs. 21.05% are unsure while another 7.02% stated that there are no directives from the ministries. This indicates that a Top-Down approach is popular among UMAP member countries. In some contexts, a clear vision or a nation wide agenda may be effective to incorporate SDSG into the higher education system.

UMAP AND SDG

This section explores the perceptions of UMAP members on UMAP as an international association and also the practice and activities that have taken place. It includes suggestions on how collaborative effort can be further enhanced .

Collaborative Efforts on SDG among UMAP Members

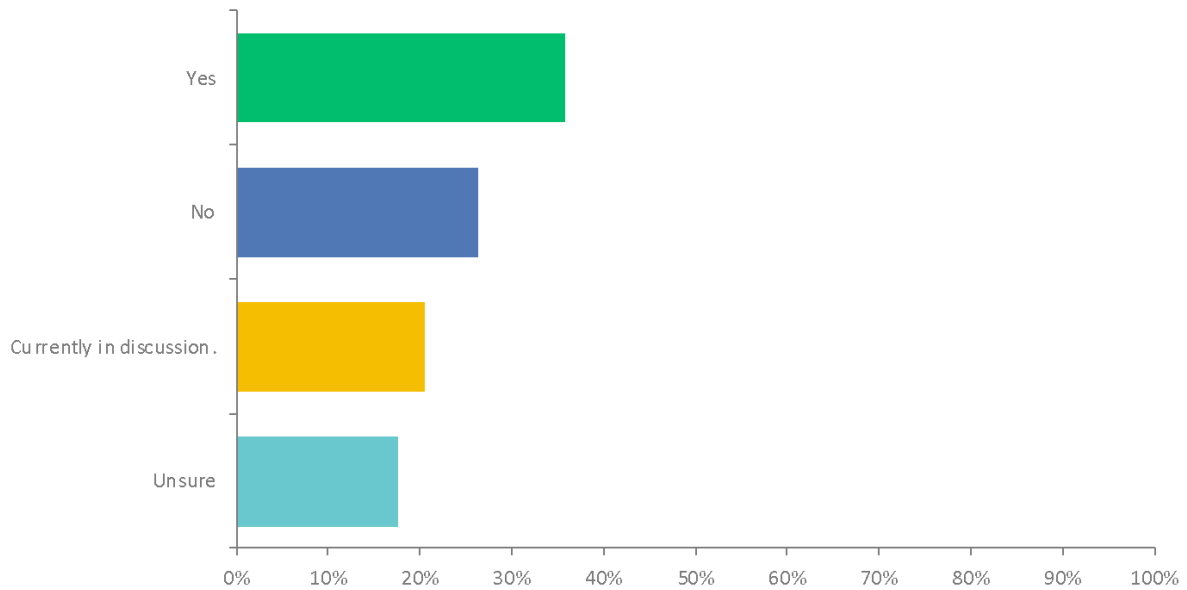


Diagram 25: Collaborative Efforts on SDG among UMAP Members

From the list of respondents, 35.67% of the UMAP members stated that they do participate in collaborative efforts with other UMAP members in executing SDG activities. 20.47% stated that they are currently in discussion with other members in planning for SDG activities. A rather high 26.32% stated that they do not have any activities collaboratively while 17.54% were unsure whether they have any. There is a strong potential for UMAP to further expand on this, to organize collaborative work for its members. But, it also needs to be constantly communicated about the large number of UMAP members and the global reach that it has to give prominence to the issues of SDGs.

UMAP as a Source of Information on SDG

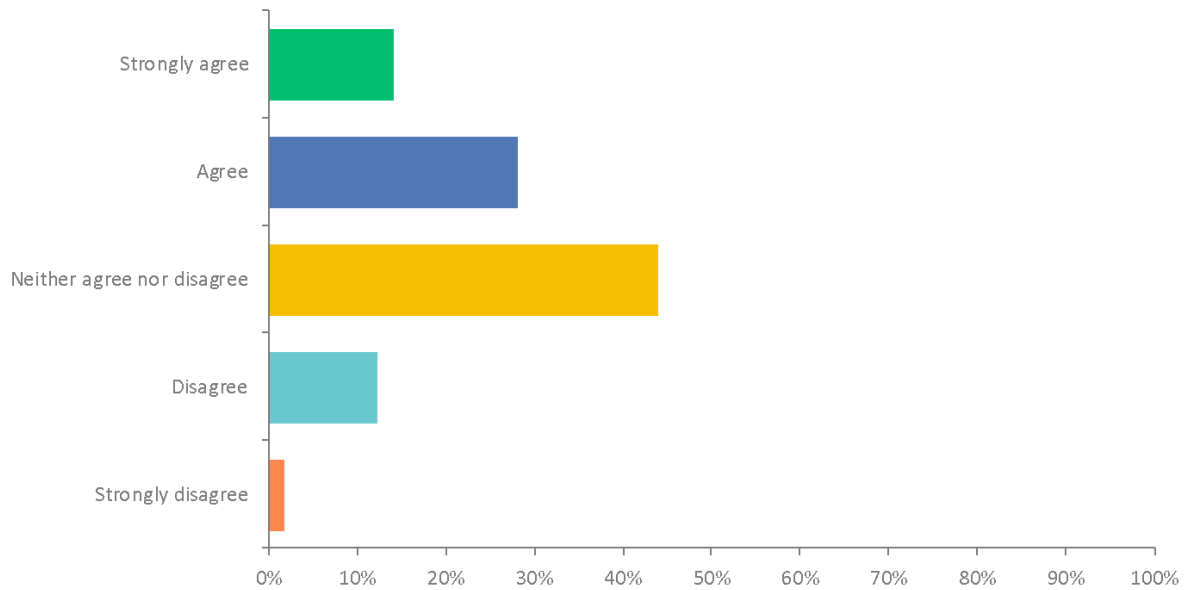


Diagram 26: UMAP as a Source of Information on SDG

In looking at UMAP as a source of information for SDG, 43.86% percent neither agree nor disagree with the statement that they obtained a lot of information and resources on SDG from UMAP. 14.04% strongly agrees while another 28.07% agrees with the above statement. A total of 12.28% disagreed with the statement while another 1.75% strongly disagreed. UMAP can further enhance its role by providing more information on SDG to its members. But being positioned as an international association, the content and context information should be through the sharing of practices, activities, and experiences of its members. Thus members and national secretariats should also play an active role in sharing these information.

Requirement for UMAP to have an institutional leader/champion for the 17SDGs

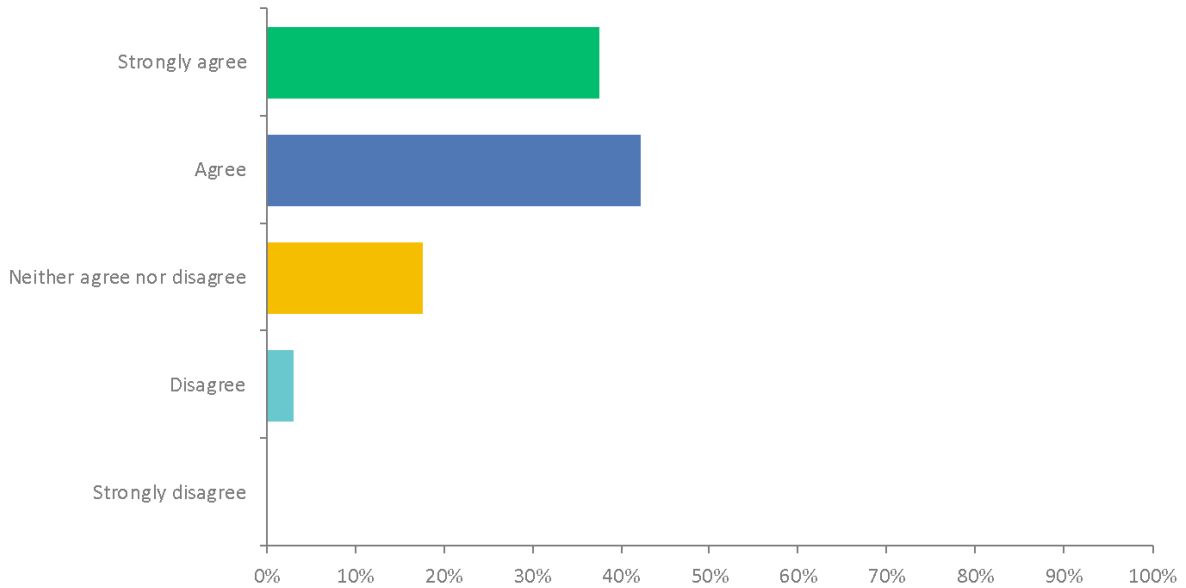


Diagram 27: Requirement for Institutional leader/ champion for each SDG

There was an agreement among members for UMAP to organize the SDG agenda by having an institutional leader or champion for each of the SDGs. 37.43% strongly agreed and another 42.11% agreed for the need of an institutional leader. As UMAP has already developed a task force for the SDG, it could be a great strategy for these thematic leaders to be placed under the respective SDGs. around 17.54% neither agreed or disagreed while only a small number of 2.92% disagreed with the call.

Staff Attendance Capacity Building Training organized by UMAP.

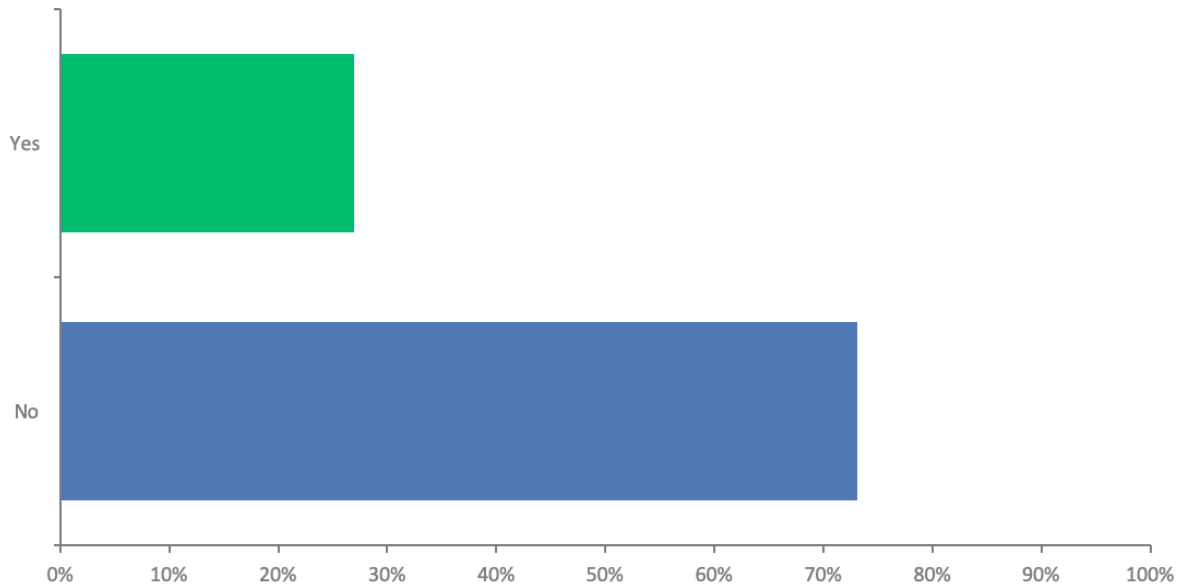


Diagram 28: Staff attendance Capacity Building Training organized by UMAP.

Though UMAP has organized various capacity building training programs for staff members, a majority of the staff members from member institutions have yet to participate in the capacity building training programs. Over 73% of the respondents have not attended the programs while only 26.9% have participated. There is a room for improvement here and maybe a need for a specific approach on how UMAP is able to get more members to participate in the Capacity Building Training programs. Though institutions have not sent staff to participate for programs under UMAP, they do obtain the exposure by organizing internal SDG trainings within their own institutions.

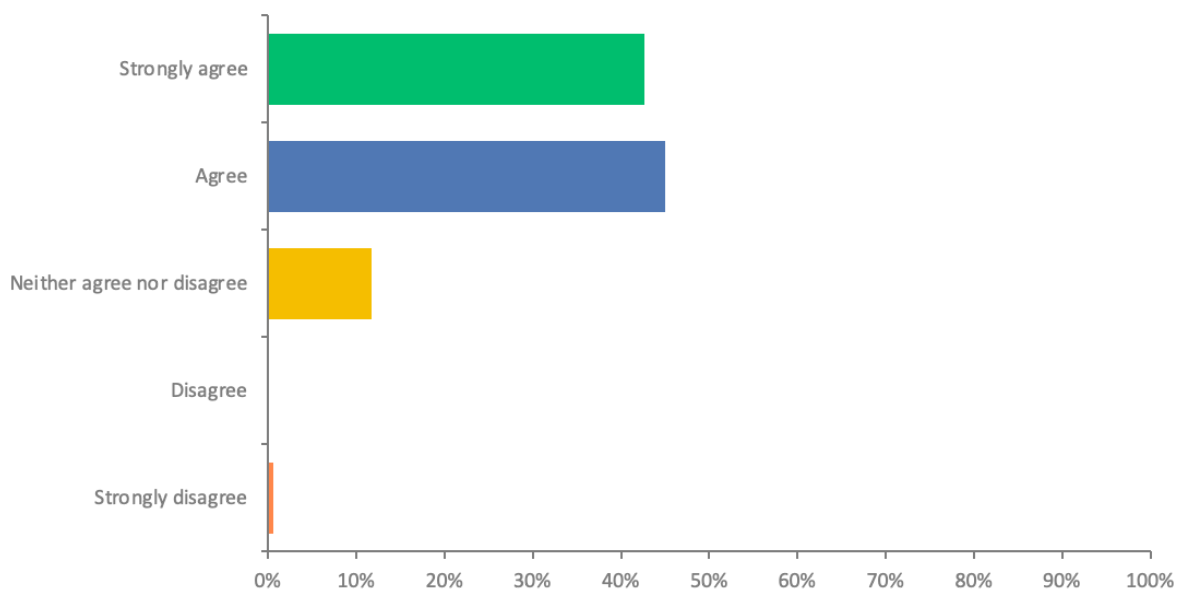


Diagram 29: UMAP’s role in promotion of SDG.

A majority of members feel that UMAP needs to play a stronger role in promoting SDGs to its members. Almost 88% either strongly agree and agree for a stronger role by UMAP. In addressing this issue it is important to note that it is not the sole responsibility of the international secretariat to take charge of the SDG agenda; however, it also requires the active role of the members and national secretariats. At the International secretariat level, an SDG task force has been established to discuss the agenda and the future of SDG. More cooperation and collaboration and development of activities is required among member countries as well.

Overall perspective

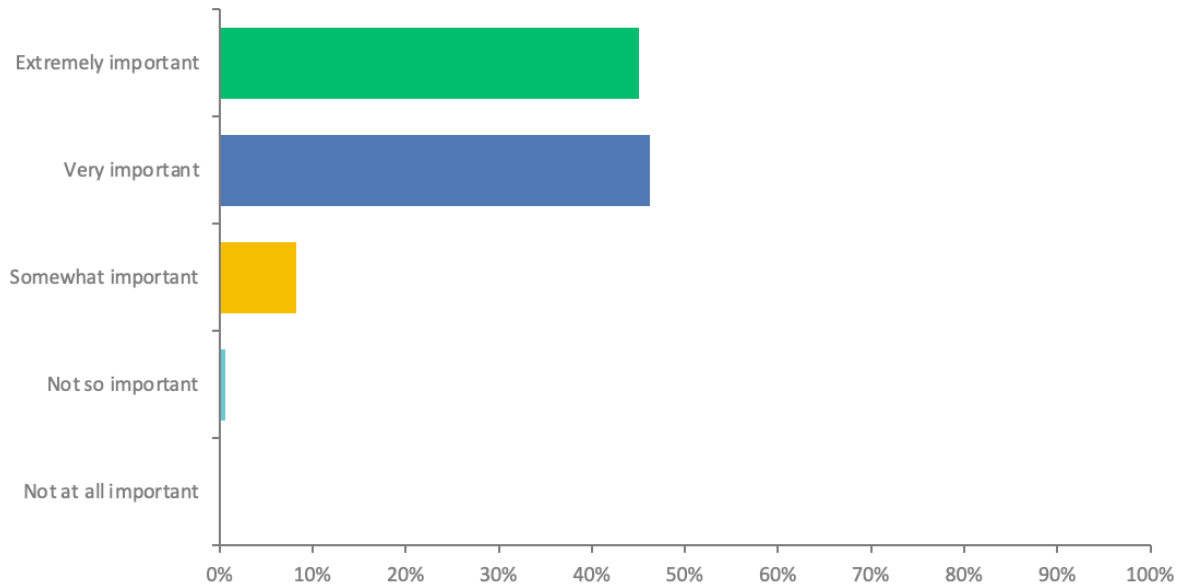


Diagram 30: SDG as agenda for future planning

All in all, a majority of the respondents have stated the importance of SDG in their future agendas. A total of 45.03% categorized it as extremely important while 46.20% views it as very important. This clearly shows that institutions believe that generally SDG is definitely important, the way of the future and needs to be incorporated into the future planning of the institutions.

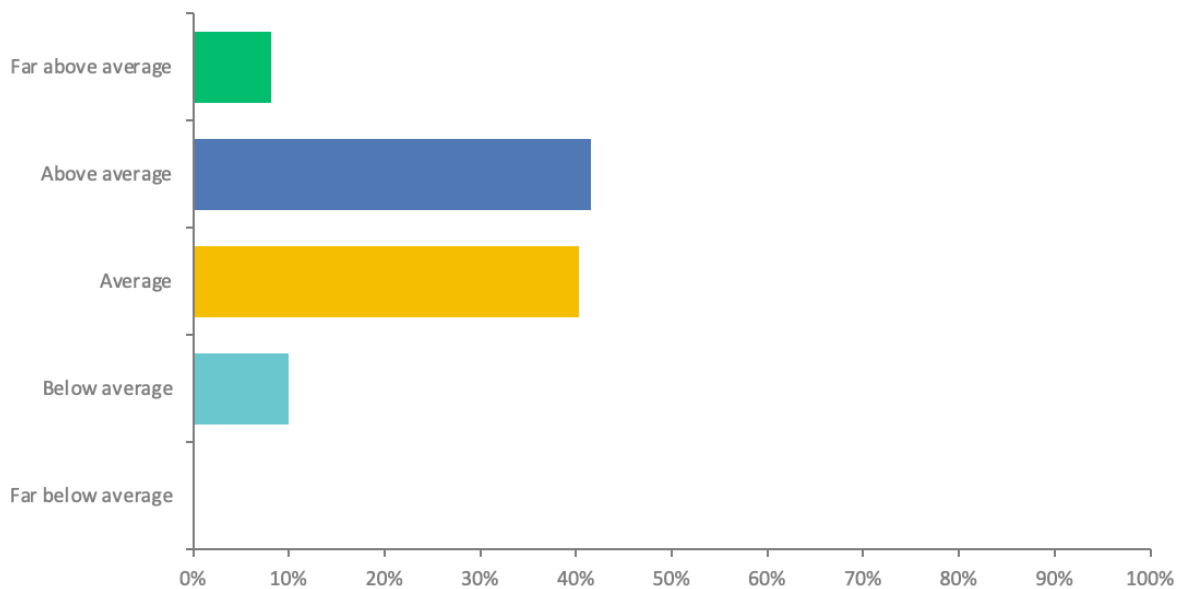


Diagram 31: Rating of current institutions SDG performance

In looking at the overall feedback of the member institutions. only 8.19% of institutions categorized themselves as far above average. 41.52% stated that they were above average. A total of 40.35% rates themselves as just average while 9.94% rated them as below average. This shows that institutions are developing their respective SDG agenda and that the member institutions are also at different phases of development. In planning for UMAP SDG activities, these are factors that can be considered in terms of the level of the knowledge and practice of the respective institutions. Some may require basic elementary training while some members may require a more advanced program.

Findings: Interview Data

Roles in disseminating information on SDG.

Based on the interview, the role played by the interviewee concerning the dissemination /communication and implementation of SDGs in their institution includes providing direction, assisting in policies (Respondent 2; 4; 7 and 9), coordinating research and education (respondent 3, 5, 7, 10), center for dissemination (Respondent 1, 2,3), tracking the progress (Respondent 5) to creating programs (Respondent 1, 3,5) for the university as well as for international students and partners. Most of the strategic work providing direction and assisting the policies written at the international, national and university levels is done by the interviewee that is involved in the management of the country's higher education or university. This group doesn't have the direct implementation power on the outcome from the ground but can influence the direction of the country and university in SDGs. The second tier is the international office and the specially designated entity for SDG. Although both are given roles of the center for dissemination and circulation of information, coordinating research and education, and tracking the progress of the SDGs, the implementation will be specific to their role. In the case of creating a program, an international office will create a program that answers to the goal for international students and partners while the specific center has to create a program that crosses the education or student experience to various aspects of management and development within the university. The same goes for coordinating research and education but most of the work of tracking is within the specific center except for the university at the initial level of tracking the gap of SDGs implementation within the university. It is also important to highlight the

roles played by the office of the interviewees also contributed to the experience with the work or research in SDGs or the previous approach of SD.

Issues to consider when planning for SDG in institutions

Among the issues incorporated in planning to implement SDGs in their institutions, are the level of understanding and practice of SDGs in their country and institution as stated by Respondent 1- *“Part of it start by recognizing their gap which is lack of understanding, by start disseminating information about that, to work with some academics that already were working or somehow. we're going to establish the SDG agenda as a kind of to be followed up in our institution”.*

This is often connected to their role and action taken by the institution to minimize the gap of SDG practice in the respective country and institution. The list of key issues addresses the lack of awareness among the university management and researchers, the need to provide strategies on SDGs, research that is not connected with SDGs and the lack of experts to implement the program. To some extent, some admit the need to fulfill the requirement by the university ranking. Some aspects of implementation also look at the existing support system within the institution and country from the policies, strategies, facilities and human resources. Another important issue that becomes the key decision or the basis for SDG implementation is the education focus (medical) and researchers that conducted applications at the frontier as well as answering the needs of the community. Besides, research extended the issue to the ability to answer the environmental issues within the countries through an interdisciplinary or more comprehensive manner.

Specific SDG Focus

The interview identified that most of the interviewees are directly connected to SDG 17 as part of their university focus. These SDGs applied to the roles of each institution that works at the international office working linking partners at national and international level as mentioned by respondents 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8. Besides partnership for goals, several interviewees recognise SDGs no 5 and SDG 4 as part of their focus, partially contributing to existing research and the role of the university in providing education for all as mentioned by respondents 1, 3, 6 and 10. Respondent 10 emphasized SDG 4 as “I believe every student

has the right to receive the same education” Scattered across the SDGs goals are SDG 1 (Respondent 6) SDG 3 (Respondent 1), 7 (Respondent 3), 8 (Respondent 1, 8), 9, 10, 11, 13 and 16. While considering their institution answered all the SDGs with the establishment of a Specific Centre for Sustainability right on campus as mentioned by Respondent 4 and more than 20-30 strategies that include SDGs in creating strategy and sustainability and sustainable development as strategy vision through partnerships that will make a difference for people and planet as stated by Respondent 9.

Despite selecting their university focus most of the interviewees share the same view as Respondent 6 who said “...all the community, all the university community implement activities that are related with the SDGs. But some of them don't really know that they're part of the implementation of SDGs, you know. So at least I have to say that we have to incorporate at least the activities about the environment, about educational quality of education and gender. “

SDG teaching in the institution

In the current educational landscape, the incorporation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into university curricula is in a nascent stage. While multiple institutions are in the process of developing comprehensive SDG programs, the focus tends to remain elementary. This signals both the nascent stage of these programs and the broader challenges associated with instilling a multidisciplinary approach to sustainability in higher education. Nevertheless, there exist several universities that have successfully established robust teaching frameworks for SDGs, setting a benchmark for academic rigor and practical relevance in this domain.

Conversations with experts and professionals in the field suggest that raising awareness is a pivotal aspect of effective SDG teaching. The importance of awareness stems from the need to create an informed citizenry capable of making sustainable choices both personally and professionally. In this context, courses focusing on "Global Citizenship" have received noteworthy attention for their ability to blend theoretical understanding and practical application of SDGs. Such courses aim not merely to educate but to inculcate a sense of responsibility toward sustainable development, thereby fostering a more proactive approach among students. These are some of the supporting excerpt

“We have some classes teaching the students like the global citizenship programs. They are just throughout the classes and for our partners we host different kinds of programs to invite them, come to see us and also send our students overseas”. – Respondent 10

Communication of SDG activities , practice and programs

In communicating SDG activities, practices and programs, the result was divided into two internally and externally. Based on the internal approach, consistency and continuous dissemination program and seminars were done twice a year as mentioned by respondent 1 *‘We do normally once or twice a year some dissemination seminars about the agenda and we also have done last year and we're trying to repeat that this year. Sorry, we did that in January this year. A workshop, sorry, a training with academics to know the SDG agenda and some hints about how to implement that in your curriculum.’*

Respondent 3 also highlight communication with the internal researcher by stating *“ First of all, we start with disseminating all aspects of SDGs and then we work with our lecturer and also list all the department here in the university and ask them to think from SDGs framework, whenever they do research, they do public outreach, they do education, they have programme, we encourage them all to connect whatever they do with SDGs”* Media is also being used by the university to highlight the university's achievements, particularly the internal one used by the vice Chancellor's office every week. This media is also being utilized by other institutions as mentioned by respondents 6 and 7.

Another approach by the university is to encourage long-life learning for those who want to pursue study as stated by respondent 2 *“ There's this kind of approach which is open to the university to accept the elderly or many adults coming back to school to upscale and rescale as part of your implementing SDGS or as is it already part of your policies within our institution”.*

Some institutions particularly those designed to answer the need for institutional sustainability will be focused on programs and activities that work on answering the key point within the sustainability ranking from the community as a way to heighten the interest of the high management.

The external communication on SDG activities, practices and programs to their partner and other institutions includes creating tasks, dialogue, programs, workshops, guest lecturers and classes from different institutions abroad as practices at the institution led by respondents 1, 3, 6 and 7. These also translated to research with partner universities, communities and NGOs particularly those who work on the same SDGs across the globe. Partner universities are a mix of those with bilateral engagement and under the universities association at the national and international levels.

Research of SDG

While the landscape of academic research on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is quite varied, it is evident that many universities have committed resources to specialized research in this area. However, this commitment is not uniform across all institutions; some have developed specific, targeted research programs, while others remain less focused or have yet to initiate substantial research endeavors in this domain. Regardless of the level of institutional involvement, there is a consensus among experts and stakeholders that research should serve as the vanguard for disseminating and advancing the understanding and implementation of SDGs.

Administrative strategy plays a crucial role in shaping the impact of SDG-related research. Effective governance and well-planned administrative strategies can catalyze the development of research that is both academically rigorous and socially impactful. This includes not only the allocation of funding and resources but also the establishment of multidisciplinary teams, partnerships, and dissemination channels that can extend the reach and applicability of the research. In this way, universities can leverage strategic administrative actions to produce research that significantly advances the broader agenda of sustainable development. This is supported by respondent 5 who stated ..

“Well about the research and innovation, let me tell you that we have an A specific office that it's called innovation and entrepreneur culture that help students and professors to develop projects that has to be with the with the innovation but also related with the Sdgs and specific fund or grant being given by the Right now we don't have a founding in the

university with a public university and the situation in Mexico, all the Mexican Republic you may know is not an easy way to have funding for projects.”.

and also by Respondent 7 who stated

“Research has been identified as the lead to actually take on the preparation of this blue blueprint.”.

Key Challenges in Implementing SDG

One of the most pressing challenges in implementing SDGs at the university level is the constraint of budget and financial capability. While the importance of sustainable development is widely acknowledged, many institutions struggle with allocating sufficient resources to create and maintain comprehensive SDG programs. This financial limitation extends to various aspects of implementation, from developing curriculum and research initiatives to establishing specialized work teams. The absence of adequate manpower further exacerbates these challenges, rendering institutions ill-equipped to manage and execute SDG-related projects effectively.

A second significant challenge is the general lack of awareness among students, faculty, and administrative staff. This deficit in understanding often results in a limited engagement with SDG initiatives, undermining their effectiveness and reach. Increasing awareness is not just a pedagogical concern but also a broader institutional responsibility that intersects with curriculum development, research orientation, and community engagement. Without a collective awareness and understanding of SDGs, even well-funded programs may fail to achieve their intended impact.

A further complication arises from the uncertain future of sustainability goals beyond the current target year of 2030. The absence of concrete plans or frameworks for post-2030 sustainability objectives creates a sense of impermanence that may discourage long-term investment and commitment. Additionally, the underutilization of networking opportunities—both within the academic community and with external partners—limits the scope and efficacy of SDG initiatives. Networking can serve as a powerful tool for sharing resources, knowledge, and best practices, thereby amplifying the impact of individual

efforts. Therefore, addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that spans financial planning, awareness-building, manpower allocation, long-term goal setting, and network utilization.

Here are some of the supporting excerpt from the interviews,

“Second thing, the challenge is that we have not yet fully utilized the benefits of networking or an ecosystem which means for instance, XXX network, we’re very strong technology size, we’re moving towards those goals but you know I haven’t seen a very concrete vehicle that drives the university engagement really making something amazing happen I think it's still like manning pieces of small medium actions lack of a large coordinated action that can make a huge impact” – Respondent 9

“I will say the first one is the budget. You know the budgets it's the most challenging one because of the you know if we are encourage our university to do this kind of you know SDG approach probably they need some budget from us and you know is the budget from us is quite limited all right.” – Respondent 2

“It's about finding experts and also obtaining funding.” – Respondent 8

Future plans of institutions with regards to the SDG agenda and plans to achieve them.

Many institutions are collecting information on SDG agendas that have been done by their individual researchers and streamline the future planning based on the SDGs that are heavily done by their individual researchers.

Respondent 1 stated *We don't have it in the plan so far, but we collect information from actions being done from research point of view and also projects with the community, with the local authorities. And we say OK we have a lot on health for example health and Wellness. We have a lot on education. We have a faculty, a strong faculty of education that works with a with a local schools with the local government do a lot of prior.*

Many institutions are aware that they are working in some SDGs and there are some that are not covered. The future plans include looking into SDGs that are deemed still absent within the institution and to address the absent SDGs.

OK, So what we see is that for at least a couple of decades we will still be working and very related with the basic SDGs if we can say that. So yeah, So what we are trying to do is OK we are there, we don't want to be absent from these SDGs. We are still committed to that. And so for example sustainable cities is one of them, is an example of the ones that we are trying to address in the next few years.

From the perspective of ministries, the Ministry of Thailand for example, has the umbrella policy and planning implemented starting July. The future plan includes capacity building, knowledge transfer and reformation of higher education.

Respondent 2 stated that *The first one is to the, the first one is the capacity building. So we are focusing on the lifelong learning for all reskill, upskill and new skill that I mentioned earlier. And also the strategy that the second one is to encourage the research ecosystem building. Yeah, in order to facilitate research and innovation within the university and also research organization under the history.*

And also we would like to transfer the knowledge and innovation to the communities, Yes, and also industry.

The last strategy is to, if we call higher education transformation, we are going to reform higher education, not only the management system but also we are going to concern not the, you know, good governance or the ranking of our university and you know, the research outcome and things like that.

Role of higher education in advancing global agenda for sustainable development

The respondents see the role of higher education as to detect the needs of communities through dialogues, address the needs through institutional capacities and lastly to detect the gaps of the capacities to work along with private sectors to address the gaps.

Respondent 1 said *One is to have a permanent way to detect the needs of the communities, to have a strong dialogue with different institutions with communities, with people to see what are the needs, to have a good overview of that. And so the second would be to put the institutional capacities at the service of the needs that we detected. And the third one could be to detect the gaps that we have and these gaps could be related with our own activities or maybe with some public policies or maybe with some lack of capacities in the private sector.*

The respondents also opined that higher education institutions play an important role to spearhead SDGs projects and increase the awareness of younger generations and train them in implementing SDGs.

Respondent 7 commented *I think higher education institution being the hub of education for the younger generation. So we should be Spearheading, you know the SDG project for the country as well you know to start it off we these are the future leaders we are actually nurturing. So the list that we should start doing with them is in regards to creating the awareness, educating them understand about the important role of the SDG and their role in terms of, you know, upholding what needs to be done in order to achieve the goals of SDG.*

Respondent 6 said *I think the university we the, community, the university are the engines of change. Agree that we can create, we can knowledge, training, leaders, leaders, and we can promote innovation to address a global challenge. So I think that we have to work together towards more sustainable future. To acknowledge through the training for the leaders that we have to do. We have to promote, to give to the community. I think that we have to empower the future generations and leading research innovation in search sustainable solutions with with clear solutions about the problems that we are focuses right now as a entire world.*

The role of UMAP and support from UMAP in the relation to the practice of SDGs

The respondents unilaterally agree that UMAP can play an essential role to champion the practices of SDGs among members.

Respondent 8 stated *Yeah, I hope UMAP will really champion it. Yes, probably our next conversation really is on the is on the technology, the AI, et cetera. These are the things that I want to see really UMAP championing, bringing the universities that are within our organizations into this new realities, the future of higher education.*

The respondents view the role of UMAP as the connecting platform between institutions to create workshops and projects together to carry out the SDGs. Respondent 1 mentioned *So if you have institutions in Asia or in North America or in South America are working with this specific SDGs, well, let's come together to a kind of workshop to connect to have some ideas and then implement some, some new projects.*

Among some support required are the platform to share good practices among the members of UMAPs to find creative solutions around the world with regards to SDGs seeing that UMAP has extensive network of SDGs experts. Respondent 1 said *The other one could be sharing good practices, the experience that institutions somewhere in the world already have and how can you do experience and readapt that to your reality. So in order to show that this is not impossible and that normally it won't take a bunch of money to do that.*

Respondent 4 mentioned *So there are a lot of examples we can do a lot of knowledge first mutual sharing, knowledge transfer. We should try to publish a kind of for example Malaysia, Taiwan on what we see from certain Sdgs. I really think umaps should and could play a very major part in exchanging ideas in sharing, in constructing not just universities or partners within the one country but you know around our UMap family.*

Respondent 7 argued *.... UMAP is a consortium of how many universities. I think more than 500 university, right. So I am sure within that 500 over university there are universities who you know who are at different level of implementation of SDG. So they play a very this they so you may plays a very important role in terms of you know highlighting and supporting members in order to be able to access to expert in the SDG areas, the different SDG areas. And so that members can actually wait, get access to expertise, get access to best practices, get access to you know, like good case studies to assist them in terms of the their development in implementing SDG goals.*

Respondent 8 further supported by saying *Yeah, currently I think I would answer by saying that if UMAP has identified expert in the area of SDG and SDG implementation, we are more than happy to you know, link up to them and learn from them.*

The UMAP could also initiate self-assessments of the level of members in terms of SDGs implementation. The assessment would then enable universities at a more advanced level to share their practices. It was also suggested a newsletter from UMAP detailing efforts of members on SDGs for dissemination of information as well as continuation of short programmes that are related to SDGs.

Respondent 3 stated *So what I can suggest for UMAP, UMAP members, intended by themselves in the teaches of the implementation, based on their self assessment, for example, I can say for example, we can divide into three, beginner, intermediate and advanced in SDGs. And then I can say that we are in the intermediate level by example. And then UMAP can find champion at its level, and for example, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia can coach us in the intermediate level of university in the advanced level, to be the role model, sharing the best practices, and encourage all the other university to work towards SDGs, because in the previous question, I mentioned that the role of higher education is really critical. If we can share the best practice, we can encourage one another, we can have like, for example, we can have a newsletter, simply among us about SDGs, it would be very much useful, I believe. And actually, UMAP have already initiated, every short programme really need to be related with SDGs. And I strongly agree on that strongly agree on that.*

Recommendations

Based on the data obtained from both the survey and the interview data, here are a few recommendations for the research they are proposing that could help the future development of SDGs in UMAP. The proposed recommendations are as follows:

1. There is a need to identify the various stages of SDG practice and understanding that each member representatives are at. as not all member participants answered the survey questions, we have some market segments that may not be represented. A

follow up study is required to explore future direction and planning taking into account their level of advancement in incorporating SDG related activities into their institutions.

2. To have a champion university for each theme. UMAP consists of many distinguished members each with their own area of expertise. It is good to have a database or bank to manage this information so that there will be easier access to information. Having experts from institutions to lead will provide a more focused approach in dealing with a specific goal. Researchers can collaborate world wide on specific issues. This can be similar with the Thematic Network available in the ASEAN University Network.
3. To include SDG goals in newsletters, posters and promotional materials. From the study, the research team realized that there are many uncertain or unsure answers coming from the member institutions with regards to the SDG activities. It is highly advisable that promotional materials should include the SDG goals that it ties with.
4. To organize a Webinar or Forum to discuss implementation of SDGs as an association. Fully utilize the experts from each member participants. Embrace the diversity and the different cultural, geographical and economical landscape of the members. It will be a positive way in branding UMAP and SDG - THE UMAP SDG WEBINAR.
5. To enhance Capacity Building and Training - There are many experts among the members who are able to execute training programs . However Capacity Building and Training can be provided according to the different stages of SDG understanding and practice. SDG training can be targeted to a beginner group or to an advanced group, whichever is suitable. This is the best way to train staff members and create awareness on SDGs. At the same time, a module can be developed for teaching the trainer to provide a multiplier effect. The training can also be organized regionally to deal with issues of time zones.
6. Develop a UMAP SDG strategic plan . This can provide guidance to member participants in the association. The SDG Taskforce can look into this and explore
7. Cascading functions and information. National secretariats play an important role in sharing of information to both the international secretariat and member participants. This is an important task to ensure smooth communication flow and information are shared effectively.

8. To publish a book on UMAP members best practices and success stories of the SDG. It is important to document an important period of internationalization especially in looking at how UMAP has successfully co-ordinated and collaborated SDG activities. There are many stories and narratives to share. This will be a good opportunity for us to document an important time of UMAP.
9. There is a need to expand the current study to include a greater number of respondents and to look at monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the SDG. A study of best practices on usage of communication channels such as websites will allow us to see the different approaches and SDG activities conducted in universities that are highly ranked in sustainability.
10. Funding has been a key challenge highlighted. there is a need to have a more collaborative work with not only partner universities but also to consider approaching industry players for the funding.

Conclusion

The data provided outlines the key points and recommendations related to institutions' future plans for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the role of higher education, and the significance of the UMAP consortium in advancing the SDG agenda. Among the key findings are many institutions are currently collecting information on SDG agendas, particularly those aligned with the research expertise of their individual researchers. The institutions recognize the importance of addressing the SDGs and are working on streamlining their future plans to align with these goals. There is a focus on identifying and addressing gaps in SDG coverage within the institutions.. Ministries, such as the Ministry of Thailand, have introduced policies and planning to support the SDGs, including capacity building, knowledge transfer, and higher education reform. Higher education institutions are seen as key players in advancing the SDG agenda. Their role includes detecting community needs through dialogues, using institutional capacities to address those needs, and collaborating with private sectors to fill capacity gaps. Higher education institutions are also expected to increase awareness among younger generations and train them in SDG implementation.

UMAP is viewed as a crucial platform for championing the practice of SDGs among its member institutions. UMAP can facilitate collaboration, workshops, and projects among universities to achieve the SDGs. There is a need for UMAP to provide a platform for sharing good practices and creative solutions related to SDGs, utilizing its extensive network of experts. Suggestions include initiating self-assessments of members' SDG implementation levels, enabling advanced universities to share best practices, and disseminating information through a newsletter. Short programs related to SDGs are considered valuable and should be continued to further promote SDG implementation.

In conclusion, the data reveals a strong commitment among institutions and higher education organizations to the SDGs. UMAP is recognized as a key platform for facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing in pursuit of these global sustainability goals. The recommendations provided emphasize the importance of self-assessment, knowledge sharing, and the role of higher education institutions in training future leaders and driving SDG projects.