

UiO : Centre for Development and the Environment  
University of Oslo

# The Oslo-SDG Initiative

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# The SDGs







# The SDGs Should Stand for Senseless, Dreamy, Garbled

Play sports! Be in harmony with nature! And end all preventable deaths! Only the U.N. could have come up with a document so worthless.

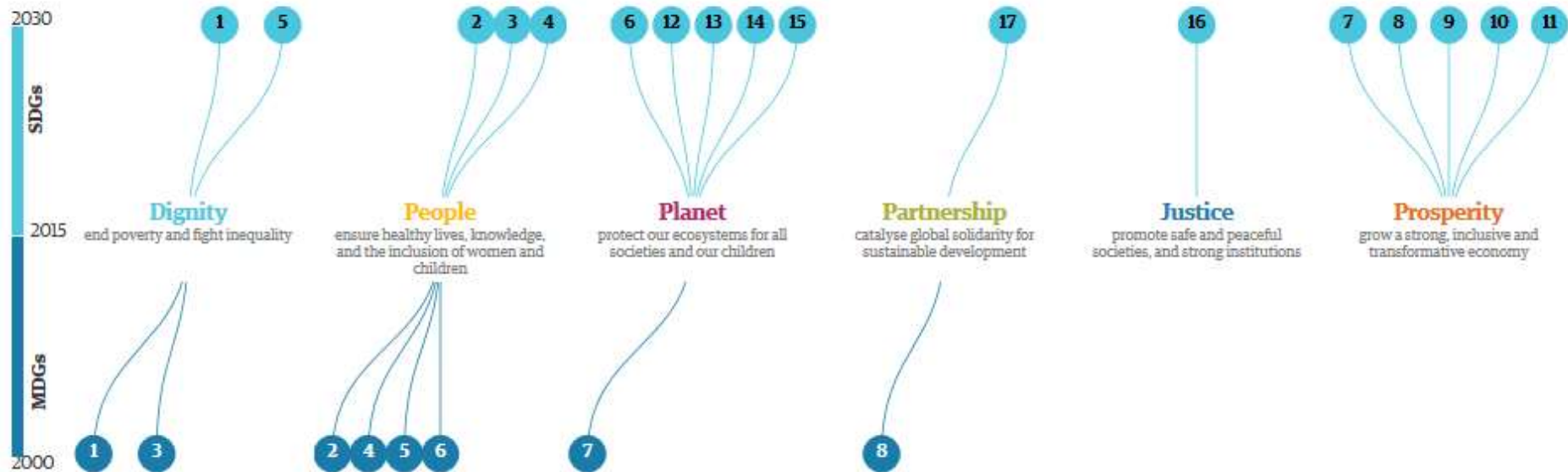
BY WILLIAM EASTERLY

SEPTEMBER 28, 2015



- SDGs = “Stupid Development Goals”; “Worse than useless”; “ambition on a Biblical scale, and not in a good way” (*The Economist*)
- “High school wish list on how to save the world”
- Too many: “Politicians have to set priorities. We need a more limited set of goals and targets that are ambitious, easy to understand, and realistic” (Brende & Høie 2015: 207)

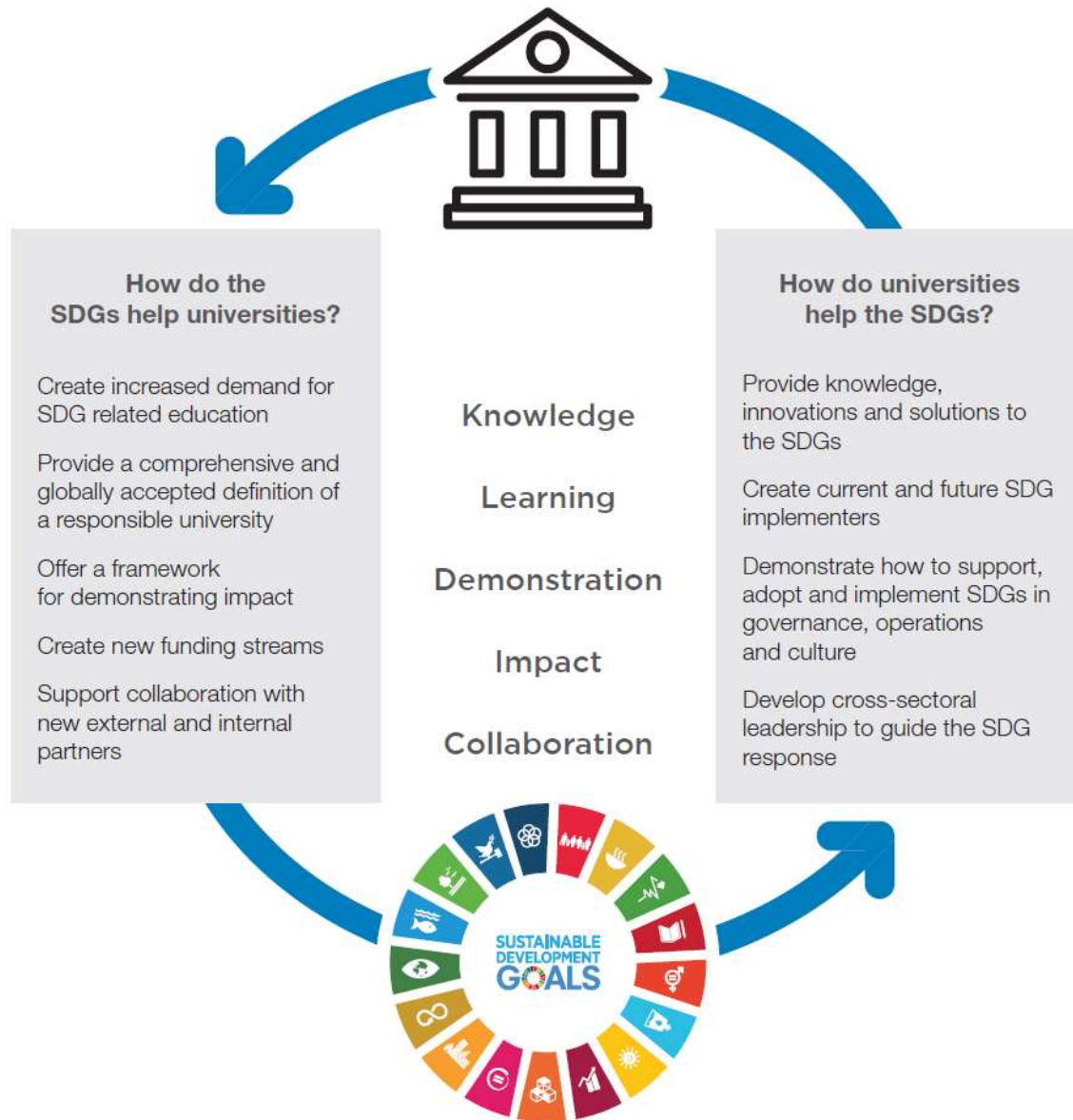
# From MDGs to SDGs



Source: *The Guardian*

- The SDGs signify a major shift in development as an international project: “Leave no one behind”
- The formulation process = participatory, with numerous stakeholders
- The SDGs are a universal recognition that poverty, inequality and environmental sustainability are as much a challenge in developed countries as they are in developing countries
- Focus on inequality reduction
- SDGs are not merely a North-South project, but rather a genuinely global project, involving multiple actors beyond the state

Figure 1: The case for university engagement in the SDGs



Source:



# The Oslo-SDG initiative at SUM-UiO

[www.sum.uio.no/sdg](http://www.sum.uio.no/sdg)

## • Research

- Long-term academic research
- Research on transformations required for SDG implementation
  - Poverty and inequality reduction; gender equality
  - Improving food security and combating famine threats
  - Innovative practices (e.g. precision agriculture, conservation agriculture, sanitation, BIG)
  - Smart aid
  - Renewable energy
  - Smart grids
  - Low-cost pollution abatement
  - Universal access to quality healthcare and education
  - Responsible consumption and sustainable cities
  - Global governance for achieving the SDGs
  - Human rights, global justice



# *The Oslo-SDG initiative*



- **Capturing demand for SDG-related education**
  - Providing capacity building for students and professionals from developing countries (e.g. SUM-Malawi Masters Program on Public Administration and Management; SUM-China research & training on SDGs and Green Entrepreneurship)
  - Classroom and online education (updated What Works MOOC with Stanford University, Feb 2018; new Politics of Poverty MOOC planned for autumn 2018)

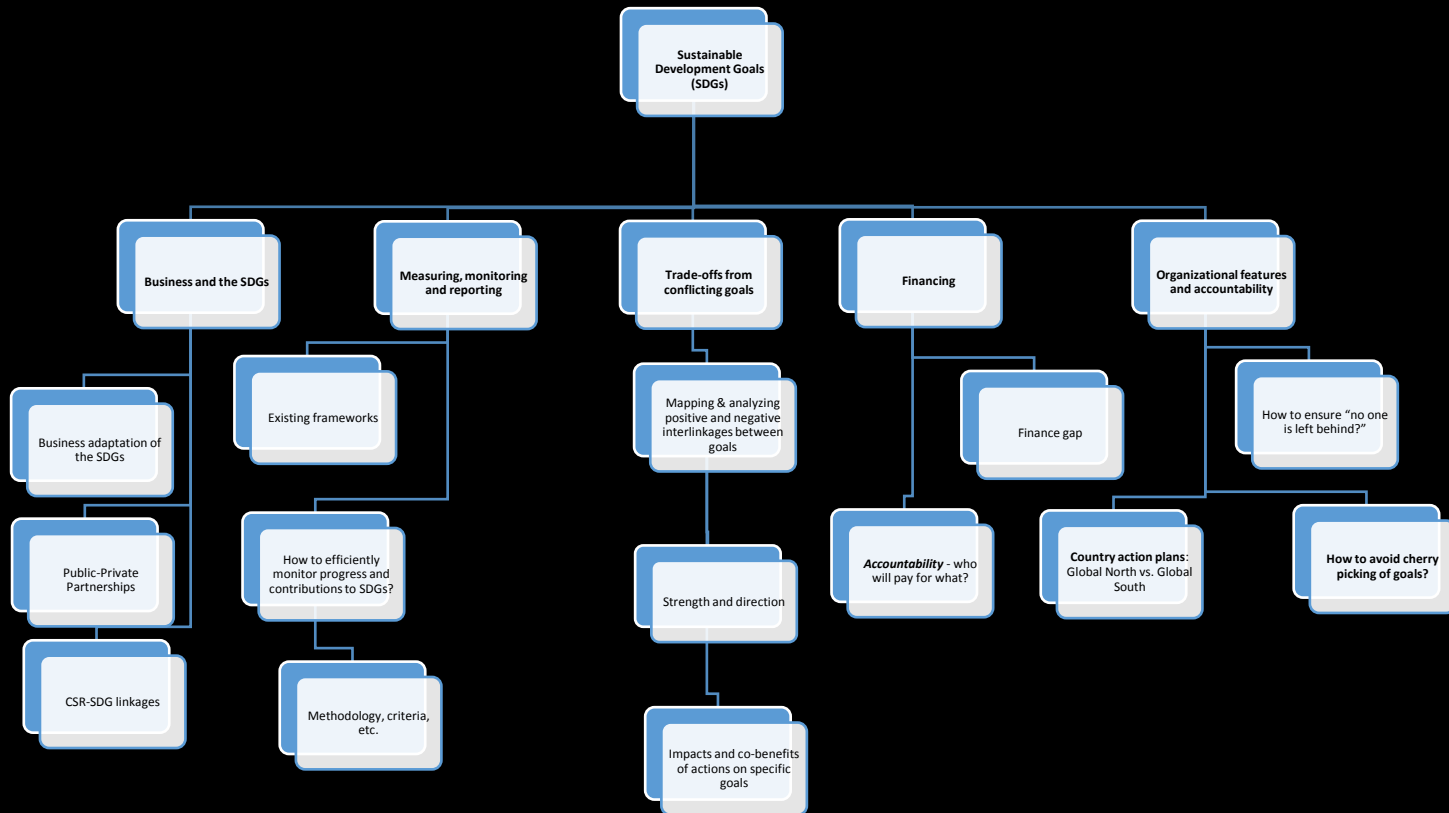
# *The Oslo-SDG initiative*

- **Building new/ consolidating external and internal partnerships**
  - SDGs provide a **common framework** for different sectors and organizations to work together on shared interests, and can also help drive inter-disciplinary partnerships, collaboration and innovation
  - SUM is ideally placed to take a lead in forming strong partnership with stakeholders – government, civil society, business
  - SUM has expertise, independence, social trust, and a long-term perspective, all of which are vital for SDG success
  - **Within SUM** (teaching, research collaboration, publications)
  - **Within UiO** (teaching, research collaboration, publications, affiliated faculty)
  - **Outside UiO** (teaching, research collaboration, publications, affiliated faculty)

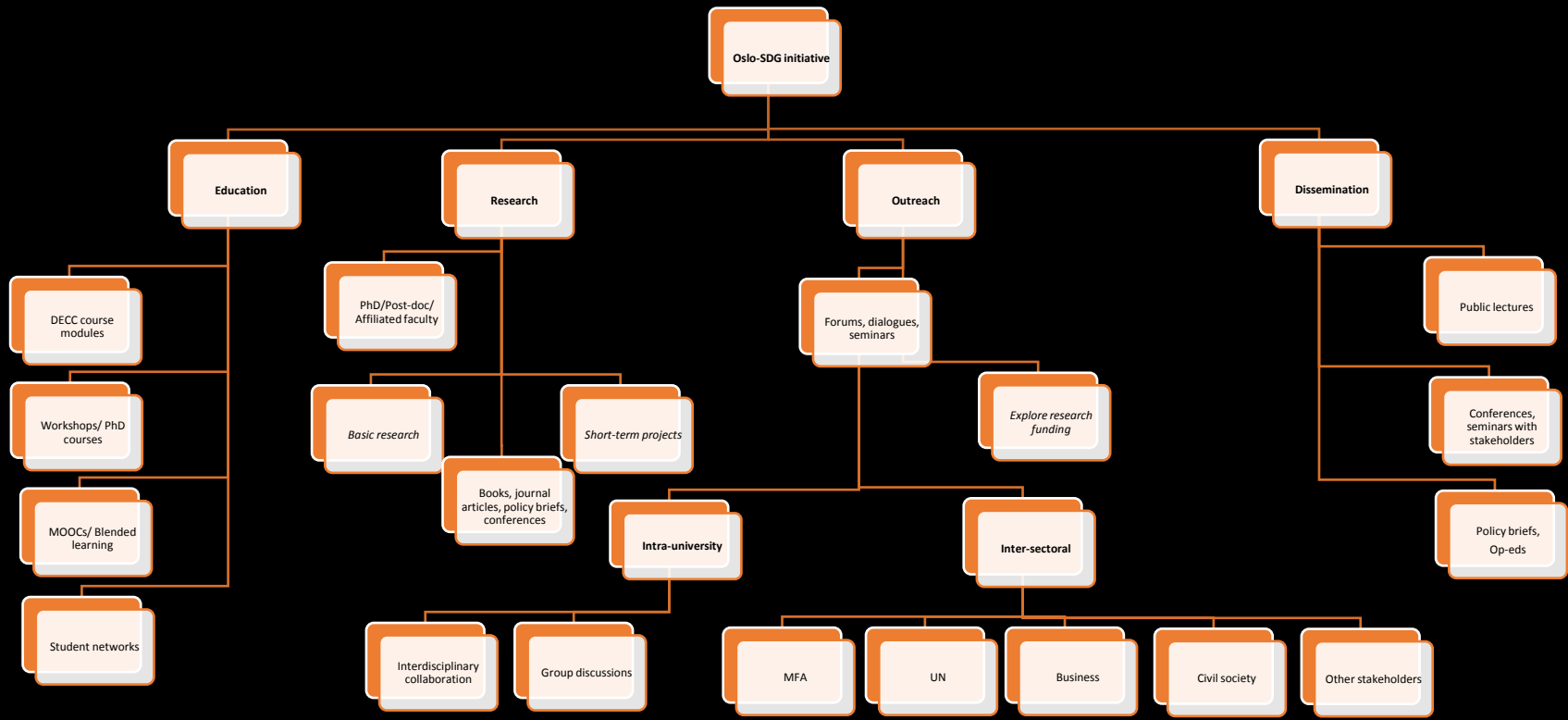
## *The Oslo-SDG initiative*

- **Demonstrating university impact**
  - Adopting a comprehensive and globally accepted definition of a responsible and globally aware university
  - Social mission and core function
  - Strengthening public engagement and participation in addressing global development

# A sample of SDG thematic areas for engagement









Research

Researcher Groups

The Oslo-SDG

• News

• Events

## The Oslo-SDG Initiative

Building on existing projects and track record, the Oslo-SDG Initiative will foster a strengthened commitment to research for sustainable development. In addition to long-term academic research on issues related to the SDG agenda, the Oslo-SDG Initiative will encourage research on the transformations required for SDG implementation.



### Participants

- Dan Banik
- Benedicte Bull
- Sidsel Roalkvam
- Katerini Storeng
- Mariel Cristina Støren
- Tanja Winther
- Jason Miklian
- Kaja Elise Gresko
- Sakiko Fukuda-Parr
- Alice Evans

→ Detailed list of participants

What Works in Development (MOOC)

### About the group

In September 2015, 193 world leaders adopted the [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While building on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

Addressing the wide range of complex global challenges put forward by the SDGs requires [a strong commitment from universities](#) across the world. Sustainable development lies at the core of the Centre for

# Our approach

- Critical, independent, analytical, basic research
- What works? Answers, not just questions
- What should be done better? What is missing?
- Highlight challenges associated with cherry-picking approaches
- Critically examining the role and impact of business in low-income countries
- Nuanced perspectives from the Global North and the Global South (including Norway, weak states & emerging powers)
- SDGs and globalization with Chinese characteristics (based on current project headed by Prof. Dan Banik)
- Contributions to on-going theoretical and methodological debates
- Empirical analysis:
  - National Action Plans
  - Measurement of progress
  - Trade-offs
  - Impacts
- Incremental approach: building on existing projects & track record

