

Practical Guide for Teachers

How can we put SDG into practice with our students?



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“Practical Guide for Teachers – How we put SDG into practice with our students?”

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Author: Rosto Solidário NGOD

Contributors: Amycos NGOD

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Partners:



1.- INTRODUCTION

Who is this for?

If you are a VET teacher and you have the purpose of integrating into your student's learning process one or more SDGs based on the Stairway approach, then this step by step handbook is for you.

What is the purpose?

To provide tools and guidelines for a flexible educational path based on the Stairway to SDG approach.

Why is it important to follow it?

Stairway to SDG is based on transformative education that focuses on behavioral change through reflection and action. To ensure an effective behavioral change, it is necessary to plan the learning process and to measure it using the indicators proposed by this approach.

What is my role in this?

As VET sectors, curriculums and national contexts are very wide and diverse it is not possible to create one plan that fits all. In the following pages, we propose a step by step path that you can adapt to your context and students.

2.- FRAMEWORK

This methodological approach is based on a set of assumptions related to Experiential Learning (Beard & Wilson, 2002), Sustainability Competencies based on Wiek (2011) and Learning Objectives based on UNESCO.

Experiential learning based on action areas to change behaviors

Experiential Learning can be defined as a “person-focused, supported approach to individual, group, or organizational development, which engages the young or adult learner, using the elements of action, reflection, and transfer” (Beard & Wilson, 2002). Building on learner’s former experiences, each one within the group should be guided by the facilitators to engage in effective learning exercises following a four-step cycle called the Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb,1984): 1) Concrete Experience; 2) Observation and reflection; 3) Forming Abstract Concepts; 4) Testing in new situations.

Within the Stairway to SDG, the first step should allow participants to experience a new situation or to reinterpret an existing experience. The second step should guide participants to remember, describe and understand the experience from the first step. In step 3 participants are invited to reflect on their own experience looking for patterns and overall conclusions and its links to the “real world”. Finally, in step 4 participants have the chance to find ways to apply conclusions to the world around them and their personal lives (Kolb, 1984). This step has crucial relevance to learning consolidations and can trigger new learning cycles and change behaviors.

The Stairway to SDG proposal includes three action areas for each SDG. The action areas were created based on a participative approach that includes a reflection from teachers and sustainability experts. This approach recognizes how it is relevant to work the SDG based on the concrete experience and daily life of the learners (step 1), create the opportunity to reflect and conceptualize (step 2 and 3) and put it into practice (step 4).

Action areas are used as there is a need to “translate” SDG from several thematic fields, many of them associated with macro policy-making levels, to an individual level to promote personal responsibility and commitment. Action means something concrete, measurable and is directly connected with the behaviors of people and not only with their ideas, thoughts or opinions. Our Action Areas have points in

common with driving forces for sustainable daily life actions¹ and if we want to promote sustainability, we have to reinforce individual responsibility and active participation.

Sustainability competencies and Learning Objectives

“We are in the early stages of a fundamental and globally pervasive transformation in the interactions of humans, their institutions, the technologies they have created, and the environment that provides both the home and the resources that make it all possible.” (Wiek et al., 2011).

There is a general consensus that sustainability has key competencies that allow citizens to engage constructively and responsibly with today's world. Key competencies represent cross-cutting competencies that are necessary for all learners of all ages worldwide (developed at different age-appropriate levels). Key competencies can be understood as transversal, multifunctional and context-independent.

In this case we use a validated set of sustainability competences: Systems thinking competence; Anticipatory competence; Normative competence; Strategic management and action competence; Interpersonal competence; Embracing diversity and interdisciplinary competence.

In this approach, we consider UNESCO learning objectives defined by SDG that include cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral domains. Cognitive domain is related with knowledge and thinking skills. Socio-emotional domain is related to social and self-reflection skills, values, attitudes and motivations. The behavioral domain describes action competencies.

¹ (Smith-Sebasto & D'Acosta, 1995; Monroe, 2003): a. Civic action (e.g., voting, petition signing) b. Educational action (e.g., looking up information, reading) c. Financial action (e.g., donating money, boycotting a company or product) d. Legal action (e.g., using the legal system to force compliance with environmental law) e. Persuasive action (e.g., advocacy, letter writing) f. Direct behavior i. Making a one-time purchase (e.g., buying an Energy Star appliance or insulating a home) ii. Making a frequent purchase (e.g., consistently buying locally produced goods) iii. Curtailing or ending a certain type of behavior (e.g., driving less) iv. Substituting a new for an old behavior (e.g., biking instead of driving) v. Making a behavior more efficient (e.g., carpooling instead of driving alone).

3.- PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

In the following pages we set out a step by step path based on your needs, curriculum and subjects to plan activities with your class. Here we outline four options for the education activities as a basis for your planning.

a. Stairway to SDG Proposal

We propose a flexible process based on three stages to be done directly with the students:

- Initial assessment – to check the behaviors of the students as a pre-test. It can be done with other tools but the APP that we develop can be a useful and practical way to do it. It's important to use this as a self-assessment for the student and to collect more information to prepare the next stage.
- Learning process - composed by a set of educational activities with different options that we suggest below. For this, you have to evaluate the context (the students, curriculum, etc.), the time available to do this process and to choose the SDGs you want to work with;
- Final assessment – to check the behavioral change that occurs in the student’s life during the learning process. This isn't a formal evaluation but a way of getting students to recognize his/her evolution during the learning process. In a formal education context, you can evaluate this through a paper, a test, etc.;

In parallel to reinforce this process we offer the option of adding the students to a web 2.0 community to share, to discuss, etc.

	Behaviors Initial assessment	Learning Process	Behaviors final assessment
Tools	APP	Set of activities to implement with the learners with a call to action	APP
	Organizational assessment Web 2.0 community for the learners		

Before this process with students the teachers and/or the NGO workers need to do a short assessment and plan the activities with the students as it’s important to know the curriculum, the target group and their own needs.

4.- EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Taking into consideration the time available and the desired learning pathway, it's possible to choose one of four paths. All the activities and the APP can be used separately but to have a stronger impact we recommend following one of these options.

Options:				
Learning Pathway	A	B	C	D
Title	“Simple”	“Intermediate”	“5 Ps”	360°
N° of SDGs	1	2 or more	1 of the 5 Ps ²	All agenda
N° of sessions	3 – 7	6 – 10	+ 10	+ 20
1. Introductory session	1	1	1	1
2. SDG Specific Session	1 – 4 + <i>Call to Action</i>	4 – 8 + <i>Call to Action</i>	+ 8 + <i>Call to Action</i>	+ 17 + <i>Call to Action</i>
3. Final session	1	1	2	2
Timeframe	From 1 to 3 months	Half year	Half or 1 year	1 or 2 full years

² The 17 SDGs are grouped into 5 subgroups / themes: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnerships

What kind of activities can you choose in the different sessions?

- **Initial Assessment** - you can use the APP to measure the behavior related to one SDG or more. How to use it will depend on the option selected. For the option D, it will be important to answer the questions for the 17 SDGs but it's better to do it on different days and before the introductory session. For the shorter options the assessment can be included during the introductory session.
- **Introductory session** – As a first approach we recommend carrying out an activity to motivate the students and promote empathy towards the agenda. In general, the activity needs to introduce the SDGs that you select but it's important to show it as part of the overall agenda. A simple activity to introduce it can be using the videos per SDG that we have in the platform with a debriefing with the students afterwards. In the shorter options in this session it's also possible to do the initial assessment.
- **Specific sessions** - if you have several sessions it's important to create a “snowball” process of increasing complexity and the last activities need to be more related to concrete actions and effective call to action activities. The first sessions on the topics need to be of a more introductory nature to promote self-reflection based on the participants past behaviors, knowledge and experience. To carry this out you can select activities proposed in the platform and from other sources;
- **Call to action (challenge) activity** – it will be important to have some sessions (included in the activities) with some proposals that push the students to act. This call to action can also have a parallel action (out of the class and/or school) to propose it such as a volunteering activity, an activist demonstration, a vegetable garden in the school, etc.
- **Final session** – select an activity that explores all the areas previously visited in the last sessions, to reinforce the interdependence dimension of the agenda and to promote system thinking and a multidisciplinary learning process. The activity should be based on a final robust debriefing to achieve and consolidate learning. In the option A, B you can do a final assessment in this session too;
- **Final assessment** – You repeat the same Initial assessment. For option C and D you can add an extra task for the students like a project to implement, a real business case to solve or a report of a volunteering experience to present.

After that it is time to plan, based on the analysis, and make some decisions:

- How long do you want to do this process? Based on this you can select the option A, B, C, D or design your own learning path;
- What SDGs and action areas do you want to work with?
- What activities do you want to do?
- Who will be responsible for the sessions?

Finally, you need to schedule it and implement it.

For that you can use the following table:

School	
Course	
Class	
Year	

SDGs selected	
N° of sessions	

Activities	What?			How?			When?										
	SDG	Action Area	Activity	Subject	Facilitator (Teacher, guest,...)	Place	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 5	W 6	W 7	W 8	W 9	W ?	
Initial Assessment																	
Introductory session																	
2nd session																	
3rd session																	
4th session																	
...																	
Call to Action																	
Final session																	
Final Assessment																	

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