HESI Action Group Annual Report 2022

SDG Publishers Compact Fellows Action Group

Report submitted by


Deliverables/outputs

This multi-stakeholder action group was formed to amplify and drive action from signatories of the SDG Publishers Compact. The Compact, launched by the International Publishers Association and the United Nations in 2020, promotes SDG-alignment and action from the wider publishing sector. The group has released a video to introduce the mission and aims of the fellows, and published a policy brief under the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC2022), launched a website and a LinkedIn profile. All of these efforts raise awareness of the Fellows' recommended actions, called the Top Action Tips, designed for publishers, academic authors, graduate students, researchers, practitioners and librarians on how to align with and support the SDGs plus enhance connections between researchers and practitioners. Added to these resources are two new author guides to increase and enhance the sharing of practical implications of SDG research with practitioners, professionals, policymakers, journalists and the public, to put the SDGs into practice and drive real world impact. On 2 November, 2022 the action group hosted a Solutions Summit for 291 journal editors, editorial directors and publishers. The summit focused on the international trends in academic publishing to: connect research with the SDGs, improve communications between academics and practitioners to produce more informed research agendas, improve sharing of research outcomes with practitioners, and produce more co-created research. Over 65% of the attendees reported they were already aligning with these trends. The recording of the event and the slides are available here.

Integration of SDG Educational Materials: The Textbooks Fellows group has produced an SDGs Rubric that can be used to evaluate coverage of UNSDGs in textbooks and related materials. Using the rubric can identify areas that can be more inclusive of and better aligned with SDGs from the beginning of the educational materials revision process. For each SDG it lists the targets for the goal, associated keywords, and four major evaluation criteria. It is supported by an action list suggesting
how the SDG Rubric can be used by publishers and other educational stakeholders. Group members have already used it to create an SDG index for an academic article, help companies using AI to track implementation of the SDGs, and teach students to explore communities and experiences outside of their own. The group also co-organised a convening of textbook editors responsible for titles in the construction, energy efficient buildings and engineering spaces on Thursday 23 June (supported by the US DOE) to introduce them to the SDGs Rubric and a set of open-source materials on new sustainable technologies aligned with the SDGs, to increase their inclusion in key textbooks used by educators and practitioners.

**Discoverability, tracking and recognition of SDG relevant content:** It is important for practitioners and policymakers to be able to identify and find scholarly content that relates to the SDGs to inform their actions, and for researchers, funders, and universities to measure their SDGs impact. At present, no universally adopted standard exists for identifying and tagging content that relates the SDGs, so the group have collated a list of existing efforts to date, and designed and deployed an [SDGs scholarly content mapping survey](#) to find out what publishers are doing so far, and establish if there is interest in using an agreed standard taxonomy to improve and harmonise how this is done.

**Relevance to HLPF theme and SDGs**

The main contributions of this group to the 2022 HLPF theme relate to SDG4 Quality Education and SDG17 Partnerships for the Goals. Our array of resources described above are all highly focused upon **SDG4 Quality Education**, by:

- enhancing alignment of courses, textbooks, academic journals, and research agendas with the SDGs, so students and practitioners are more aware of the goals and how to take action, and challenges in reaching the goals are being addressed by research
- increasing the sharing of practical implications of research with students, professionals, policy makers and the public increases their awareness and understanding of the goals, and of what actions they can take or avoid, and decisions they can make to reach the goals
- enabling discovery of SDG-relevant content assists students, and all seekers of knowledge, in finding information and learning about the goals and the solutions available to us

The fellows have also forged several important **partnerships for the goals** this year, to increase awareness and drive action across more stakeholders:

Collaborating with [STM](#) via their STM SDGs Academic Publishers Forum to:

- officially recognise and promote our Top Action Tips and Rubric across their global publishing industry membership to increase awareness and implementation
- provide a list of existing SDG content classification resources and explore the creation of a unified, consistent SDGs taxonomy, to increase discoverability
- co-host and promote our Solutions Summits to drive action towards the SDGs.

Working with the [European Association of Science Editors](#) (EASE) we have designed a [survey](#) to:
● increase the number of SDG Publishers Compact signatories
● reveal what progress has been made by signatories of the SDG Publishers Compact
● know what is holding organisations and journals back from becoming signatories.
● feed the creation of guidelines and tools for journal editors,
● raise environmental awareness and promote sustainable practices among journal editors.

Collaborating with HESI's Rankings, Ratings, and Assessment (RRA) action group to:
● change rankings systems to give more weight to and incentivise contributions to the SDGs
● establish ways to measure and reward real world outcomes of SDG-related content.

Collaborating with ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability to connect researchers with practitioners:
● for practitioners to share real world challenges where research is needed with researchers
● for practitioners and researchers to co-create research agendas and collaborate on research
to inform practical action
● to provide evidence-based practical information on actions to take, and avoid, in practice and
policy making.

Planned activities

Future events in the Solutions Summit Series are co-hosted with STM, EASE and Cactus, and will be run in collaboration with the Education for Green Jobs Action Group (see timeline below)

Future work on tagging SDG-related material and an SDG Taxonomy is in collaboration with the STM’s SDGs Academic Publishers Forum. Taking the results of the Fellows taxonomy survey, and the Forum’s work on taxonomy use cases into consideration, a resource list of currently existing classifications will be released first, as work to build a taxonomy will be longer term.

Under our workstream of Redefining impact: The Impact and Reach group has recently formed a collaboration with HESI’s Rankings, Ratings, and Assessment (RRA) action group, focused on changing the traditional ways research impact is measured and viewed, specifically looking at academic rankings and incentives. They have already held multiple meetings with an array of ranking organisations (who either rank universities, or academic journals, or both), and will build upon this to increase the inclusion and/or weighting of contribution to the SDGs in ranking criteria and scoring systems.

Timeline:

Short Term

● 2 November 2022 Solutions Summit: convening of academic journal editors, publishers and editorial directors
● February 2023 Solutions Summit: convening of SDG practitioners with academic journal editors, publishers, and editorial directors (with one area of focus on climate solutions and green jobs)
February 2023 Interactive Workshop at Researcher to Reader conference to explore ‘How we can better communicate SDG-related research to professionals and policymakers’ with a mixed audience of publishers, librarians and researchers.

With STM’s SDGs Academic Publishers Forum:
- officially recognise and promote our Top Action Tips and Rubric across their global publishing industry membership to increase awareness and implementation
- analyse and release findings from our SDGs Taxonomy survey, use this to inform our decision about next steps regarding a unified taxonomy
- release a list of existing SDG content classifications

In collaboration with EASE, analyse and publish the results of the SDG Publishers Compact Survey

Long Term

- Work with STM’s SDGs Academic Publishers Forum to build a taxonomy (if survey results indicate a desire for a unified tagging system)
- Collaborate with HESI’s Rankings, Ratings, and Assessment (RRA) action group to change rankings systems to give more weight to, and incentivise, contributions to the SDGs
- Collaborate with EASE to create guidelines and tools for journal editors and raise environmental awareness and promote sustainable practices among journal editors
- Further Solutions Summit to convene academic researchers with practitioner groups

Membership composition

Coordinators

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debra Rowe</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>US Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evangeline Mengelkoch</td>
<td>Climate Fellow</td>
<td>Youth for Climate Education Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julia Christensen Hughes</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Yorkville University</td>
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Members/contributors

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gerald Beasley</td>
<td>Cornell University (Retired)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dana Compton</td>
<td>American Society of Civil Engineers</td>
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<td>Stuart Cooper</td>
<td>ScienceOpen</td>
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<td>Hannah Ells</td>
<td>Cengage</td>
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<td>Victoria Gardner</td>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis Group</td>
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<td>Claire Jackson</td>
<td>Emerald Publishing</td>
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<td>Nicola Jones</td>
<td>Springer Nature</td>
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<td>Arend Kuester</td>
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<td>Nikita Lad</td>
<td>George Mason University</td>
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<td>Simon Linacre</td>
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<td>Ratna Lindawati Lubis</td>
<td>Telkom University</td>
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<td>Derek Lough</td>
<td>Illinois State University</td>
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<td>Jason Maitland</td>
<td>Sustainability Institute of Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>Clarice Martel</td>
<td>Cabells</td>
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<td>David Steingard</td>
<td>Saint Joseph's University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jo Wixon</td>
<td>Wiley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roger Worthington</td>
<td>Yale University (Retired and now independent researcher)</td>
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**Engagement**

All members listed above are actively contributing to the work of the Action Group. Weekly meetings are held to track and report progress, share ideas, assign tasks and discuss new proposals for actions. All publisher members communicate with their companies, staff, and editors on behalf of the fellows and regularly offer information and contacts needed to build invitation lists for fellows events.
Every member takes part in at least one workstream and working group at a time and all actively seek advocacy opportunities to speak or hold workshops at educational, sustainability, author and publishing industry events to raise awareness of the UNSDGs, of the SDG Publishers Compact, and of the work of, and resources produced by, this action group.

On alternate weeks, our meetings are used for breakouts to allow working groups time to plan activities or work together on projects or to produce new resources. As needed, some fellows hold additional meetings to ensure momentum is maintained on projects.

Several fellows have also joined the STM’s SDGs Academic Publisher Forum, to maintain a strong and proactive connection between the two groups, and some Fellows have also joined the Forum’s SDGs taxonomy work group of the forum, to continue the work started by the Fellows.

Three publisher members are active in the collaboration with EASE, to date having contributed to the design and building of the SDG Publishers Compact survey and presented at the survey workshop.

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