SDGs in Practice | by **UN DESA** & **UNITAR**

A **Decade** of
Learning, Training
and Practice for the
Sustainable
Development Goals

A Decade of Learning, Training and Practice for the SDGs

For ten years, the SDGs in Practice series – held as a special event to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) - has provided a dedicated space for applied knowledge-sharing, skills-building, and collaboration to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The series has sought to equip policymakers, practitioners and various stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed for SDG implementation.

A **total of 106 training and learning sessions on SDG implementation** have been convened by UN entities, governments, academia, civil society, and the private sector, reaching thousands of participants. Each year, the sessions have aligned with the HLPF themes and the SDGs under review, complementing the Forum's policy discussions and ensuring relevance to participants.

A collaborative approach to delivery

Over the decade, about **250 unique partner organizations** have collaborated in the design and delivery of the training sessions. The mix has been genuinely multi-stakeholder, spanning governments, UN system entities, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

Together, these partners embody the spirit of SDG 17 in action—bringing complementary perspectives, expertise, and capacities to a common platform for shared learning.

Overview of the Decade

2016 ● **10 sessions | 23 partners**

National Reviews & Planning, Data Revolution & Integration, Innovation & Design Thinking, Gender Equality (SDG 5), Partnerships & Capacity, Climate & Resilience.

2017 ● **10 sessions | 21 partners**

Poverty & Human Rights, Stakeholder Engagement, Business & Sustainability, Data & Monitoring, Health & Social Work, Women & Inequality (SDG 5).

2018 ● **15 sessions | 43 partners**

Foresight & Policy Planning, Trade & SDGs, Consumption & Production (SDG 12), Sanitation & Inclusion, Higher Education & Student Action, Cities & Local Action (SDG 11), Energy & Climate (SDG 7), Peace & Justice (SDG 16), Human Rights & Poverty.

2019 ● **9 sessions | 40 partners**

Partnerships & Capacity, Financing & Policy Coherence, Justice & Peace (SDG 16), Education & Academia, Human Rights & Inclusion, Digital Skills & Future Readiness.

2020 ● **11 sessions | 39 partners**

Education & Learning (SDG 4), Data & Reporting, Urban Development (SDG 11), Economies & Recovery, Environment & Commons, Energy (SDG 7), Digital Skills & Innovation, Partnerships & Coherence.

2021 ● **9 sessions | 33 partners**

Higher Education & Learning (SDG 4), Nuclear Disarmament & Sustainability, Cities & Local Governance (SDG 11), Policy Coherence & Recovery, SDG 16+ & VNRs, Data & Evidence.

2022 ● **10 sessions | 33 partners**

Education (SDG 4), Partnerships & Multi-Stakeholder Action, Gender Equality (SDG 5), Ocean & Biodiversity (SDG 14), Human Rights & Global Citizenship, Nuclear Disarmament & SDGs.

2023 ● **9 sessions | 26 partners**

Sustainable Cities (SDG 11), Partnerships & Engagement, Energy (SDG 7), Facility Management & SDGs, Post-COVID Recovery & Inclusion.

2024 ● **9 sessions | 23 partners**

Citizen Data & SDG Monitoring, Peace, Justice, Institutions (SDG 16), Jobs & Social Protection, Data Collection & Analysis, National Transformation & Governance, Climate, Biodiversity, Pollution, Capacity Development & Learning, Education & AI, Partnerships.

2025 ● **12 sessions | 37 partners**

Citizen Data & Inclusive Data Systems, Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships & Financing, Employment & Just Transitions, Strategic Foresight & Policy Planning, Inclusive Policies & Stakeholder Engagement, Oceans & Blue Economy, Gender Equality, Green Growth & Resilience, Health & Well-being.

Lessons learned

Over the past decade, SDGs in Practice has evolved from a foundational learning space into a practice-oriented platform that has equipped policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders with the knowledge and hands-on skills needed to advance the implementation of the SDGs.

Drawing on ten years of experience, the following section provides an overview of key lessons learned from the series and how they have shaped its approach to capacity-building, knowledge-sharing, and action-oriented learning.

1

Alignment with HLPF themes and SDGs in focus

Ensuring that sessions were linked to the HLPF's overarching theme and the SDGs under in-depth review has proved crucial in attracting balanced participation from government representatives, civil society actors, and other stakeholders. This alignment has created a strong policy connection and has positioned the series as a practical complement to the intergovernmental policy discussions taking place at HLPF.

2

Session design and inclusivity

Sessions that were structured as a progression from challenge to tool to practice have consistently had a positive impact. Demonstrating a specific tool or practice in action and complementing it with a real-world example has strengthened participants' ability to replicate approaches in their own contexts.

The inclusion of short, interactive exercises - such as live polling or breakout-room discussions - has proved highly effective in translating theoretical knowledge into concrete action steps, ensuring that participants were instilled with skills they could immediately apply.

Efforts to achieve balance across gender, geographical representation, and stakeholder diversity - including organizations of persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and women's groups - have significantly improved the quality and depth of dialogue and outcomes.

3

Partnerships, data and evidence

One of the insights that has stood out is that multi-stakeholder collaboration needs to be treated not as an ad hoc activity but as an integral part of institutional practice and a core professional competency. Effective partnerships have been those built on clearly defined roles, strong facilitation, transparent governance structures, and predictable financing mechanisms tailored to collaborative work. Treating partnership facilitation as an investable function - rather than relying solely on project-based funding - has enabled longer-term engagement and more sustainable outcomes.

Another key lesson has been that integrating diverse data sources—administrative, geospatial, and citizen-generated - into policy cycles can deliver actionable insights. Demonstrations and case examples have shown that when these data ecosystems feed into Voluntary National Reviews, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and national development plans, they strengthen evidence-based policymaking.

4

Evolving modality

Adopting a blended approach that combined virtual and in-person sessions has proved effective in expanding participation from developing countries and marginalized groups. Originally introduced in response to the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, the virtual format has since been maintained as a valuable tool to extend global reach and enhance accessibility. At the same time, strategically selected in-person sessions have continued to provide the convening power necessary for dialogue, as well as for building partnerships, trust, and ownership.

SDGs in Practice
Learning Library

To mark the decade milestone, the **SDGs in Practice Learning Library** is being launched as a new resource.

The library brings together the full record of sessions over the past decade into one accessible platform. It is designed as a practical tool for policymakers, practitioners, and educators seeking tested approaches to accelerate SDG implementation.

The library extends the reach of the series beyond HLPF, ensuring that the lessons, tools, and methods developed through collaboration with hundreds of partners remain accessible and actionable in the years leading to 2030.

Available at:

sdgsinpractice.netlify.app

Looking ahead

As the 2030 deadline approaches, SDGs in Practice illustrates that knowledge-exchange is itself an accelerator. By convening diverse actors around applied learning, the series continues to strengthen the enabling conditions for partnership, policy, and systemic change for SDG implementation.

The Decade of Learning, Training and Practice for the SDGs has demonstrated that sustained investment in training, practice, and collaboration is essential to turning commitments into action.

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