



## HESI SDG Publishers Compact Fellows: Top Action Tips

### Graduate Researchers & Students

*Recommendations for students and graduates on how to build SDGs into new and ongoing projects.*

#### 1. Pick an SDG

Be sure to look at all [17 SDGs](#). They're fairly comprehensive, so you're bound to find something that relates to your personal research project. Your institution may already state a commitment to one or more SDGs on its website, so don't forget to check. If you can identify an SDG that you'd like to contribute to, you'll have an easier time finding appropriate articles, authors, and networking partners to help you accomplish the task.

#### 2. Work backwards

Use your research ideas to interlink them to one or more SDG. Build on that. The SDGs are all interconnected; find the intersection between your SDG and the others as you expand your research. Pivot to a systems-thinking perspective. Go big!

#### 3. Create your roadmap

Whether you're honing research questions or compiling a list of topics to discuss with campus stakeholders, it is essential that you think ahead about what you want to know, who and why you're asking, and what you want your 'ask' to be concerning the interconnected SDGs.

#### 4. Get offline

Be sure to seek out other students interested in the SDGs. Join your campus' chapter of the [SDG Students Program](#) or find research partners with [The 50 Percent](#) (Formerly the Global Youth Engagement Program) or build a local community of like-minded SDG-oriented allies on your campus (or remotely for those taking classes online).

#### 5. Which office or institute is implementing the sustainability plan?

Does your campus even have one? Few colleges and universities should be ignorant of the benefits of having an Office of Sustainability. Check with your Provost or the Research Office and see how your institution supports the SDGs or is addressing energy efficiency in your buildings, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, waste reduction, and even planting trees in your local quad.

## **6. Feed your stakeholders**

Who published recently addressing an SDG or is teaching curricula related to the SDGs? Start with your Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee, Research Office, or the equivalent campus group. Who is already engaged in the work? Is there a graduate assistantship or teaching assistantship available for a specific professor? These are all places to start your search for faculty stakeholders in the SDGs.

Can you connect with their assistant to secure a meeting? How about asking a direct question at their next public engagement? Is there a Dean or Provost that would be willing to make an introduction? The president of a college or university is a major player in the decision-making apparatus at your institution of higher education and could turn the tide in favor of the SDGs.

Regardless of size or disciplines, your institution is certainly governed by a Board of Trustees. Seek out your elected student representative to the Board and inform them of all the various ways that this powerful group of people can improve your institution by aligning their decision-making to the 17 SDGs.

## **7. Circulate with the librarians**

Familiarize yourself with your research library. Is there an option in your [library's database](#) to search for books, articles or journals that publish on any one or more of the 17 SDGs? Is there a faculty or staff member knowledgeable enough to help you get started? Can you find examples of other graduate student research projects or doctoral dissertations in the repository that address the SDGs? If possible, consider your doctoral research as a three-article dissertation with topics relevant to practitioners and aim to publish in journals that accept *researcher-to-practitioner* perspectives. See this [link](#) for more information. When in doubt, go to the library!

## **8. Apply for fellowships and get hands-on experience**

Connect with other activists, practitioners, and scholars. Apply for paid fellowships like the [Global Sustainability Scholars Program](#) or [GSS Fellows program](#). Volunteer on a SDSN Youth [project](#), or as a [SDG Publishers Compact Fellow](#). You could even convince your university to join other fellowship programs that allow you to advance the SDGs in partnership with larger organizations and societal goals.

## 9. Host a collaborative '17 Rooms' event

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Brookings Institution created an [open-source concept](#) to help organizations identify partnerships and practical steps to accelerate progress on the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. For example, [17 Rooms-U at Mason](#).

## 10. Start now

You don't need permission to get started. Just start at the top of this list and work your way down until you not only have one or more SDGs you like, but you're working with others to research, write, and publish--and maybe even get paid while you do it! Sure, there are some stakeholders who might want to have a say if you go the institutional route, but the important thing is to just begin. This list isn't exhaustive. We know you'll expand it through your own efforts!

*Graduate students are preparing to enter an academic and career climate that is burdened with two tasks: addressing the mistakes of the past and forging a habitable future for all. The United Nations Publishers Compact SDG Fellows are confident that these tips will introduce a pathway towards participation in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To ensure those choosing the challenge of achieving the SDGs by 2030, our recommendations are for masters, doctoral and postdoctoral students, who can move the needle by leveraging their personal and institutional power.*

*For over 13,000 sustainability in higher education resources, check out the hub at the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education at <https://hub.aashe.org/>. Locked resources can often be found via a web search.*