Can teachers be SDGs activists?

UNIVERSITIES, with their broad remit around the creation and dissemination of knowledge and their unique position within society, have a critical role to play in the achievement of the SDGs.

(1) Providing the knowledge and solutions to underpin the implementation of the SDGs.
(2) Providing students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to understand and address the SDGs.
(3) Embodying the principles of the SDGs through organisational governance, operations and culture.
(4) Providing cross-sectoral leadership in implementation.

But what universities are already doing? What is the best and fastest incorporation of SDGs in higher education?

In this work we focus on the role of the teachers in this process and we ask the following questions: Can teachers be SDGs activists? Can the integration process of SDGs be initiated by specific professors acting as change agents? Or should this process only be initiated by university management team?

**Integration process**

- **Bottom-up approach:** the integration process will gradually start with small scale initiatives looking for greater support on the part of management.

- **Top-down approach:** the university management team will initiate the process, but it may encounter some resistance.

**TEACHERS who have a passion for sustainability - whom we call “SDGs activist teachers” - can have a critical role in this process.**

- Teaching supports students in becoming critical, social justice-oriented thinkers in the world.
- Critical thinking skills must be put to work; we must be able to see their tangible impacts in communities and in the citizens’ lives (ex: service-learning projects).
- Teaching involves choices, for example, what content to teach, how to organize and facilitate learning, how to assess students, and what kinds of relationships to establish with them. So, teaching is inherently an ethical enterprise.

“SDGs Activist Teachers” claim the classroom as an activist space - a unique space of transformative possibility. They believe that “education is not training, and learning at its best is connected with the imperatives of social responsibility and the global challenges for the future of humanity.”