

Development of a framework for the local implementation of the SDGs – Phase II

Abstract

The ownership of the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by local authorities and communities, civil society and the scientific and academic community is paramount to the realization of the goals. Across Asia and the Pacific, while many national governments promote partnerships and local implementation in the national SDG action plans, differences abound in the extent of the implementation as well as in actual practices. Further efforts are needed to explore how the local implementation of the SDGs can be facilitated and accelerated more effectively, as well as how local authorities and communities can be empowered to implement the global goals at the local level.

Higher education institutions can play a key role in this endeavour by supporting, through research and education, local authorities and communities for the effective implementation of the SDGs at the local level. In this context, the project “Development of a Framework for the Local Implementation of the SDGs,” was launched in 2018. Bringing together four member universities of ProSPER.Net, the project aims to investigate how universities can support local authorities and communities for their effective implementation of the SDGs.

In Phase I, case studies were conducted in the respective countries of the participating institutions – India, Japan, Philippines and Thailand - to understand the current situations of the local implementation of the SDGs. The case studies demonstrated that learning took place for various

stakeholders involved in the process, including the researchers themselves, the graduate students in the research teams, the local schoolchildren, youth, community residents, and government officials, as they discussed and analyzed sustainability issues in the community.

The Project I experience yielded insights into the role of higher education institutions in the implementation of the SDGs at the local level, including a number of guiding principles for higher education institutions to support local authorities and communities effectively for the implementation of the SDGs. At the same time, it also revealed the need for more investigation into ways in which higher education institutions can foster collaboration with local communities and facilitate local and academic knowledge to be brought together to support the local implementation of the SDGs.

Building on the achievements and lessons learnt from Phase I, Phase II of the project will explore models of collaboration between higher education institutions and communities for the local implementation of the SDGs through the documentation and analysis of existing experiences among ProSPER.Net member institutions. In order to garner relevant knowledge and experiences widely, Phase II will broaden the scope of participating institutions and will be addressed not only with the ProSPER.Net members but also with higher education institutions that are leading RCEs in the Asia-Pacific region.

The knowledge yielded from Phase II will be consolidated as a resource material for use in higher education, and disseminated widely for broader audience. The project contributes to all the SDGs, in particular SDG 4 (Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships).