



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Moderation Team

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SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Event Description

On **June 21, 2021**, Queen's University hosted its first [17 Rooms](#) event, which brought together Queen's faculty, students, and staff to identify next steps for advancing the [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) at the university.

Participants were divided into 17 virtual rooms, one per SDG, and asked to identify actions **that Queen's University could take in the following 12 to 18 months to advance their specific goal.**

Rooms participants were also asked to identify:

- The most important issues related to their SDG that Queen's should address,
- Connections and common themes amongst these issues,
- How their SDG connects with reconciliation/conciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization,
- How their SDG connects with other SDGs.

Each room had two hours to brainstorm ideas before presenting their recommended actions to all participants. Following the event, each room's moderation team authored a summary report.

Room Participants

Meshack Achore (Student/Facilitator)	Anna Majury
Francesco Ambrogi	Haley McCormick (Staff/Facilitator)
Kayleigh Barlow	Kenneth Pearce
Elijah Bisung (Faculty/Moderator)	Joseph Quagraine
Stephen Brown	Nishana Ramsawak
Allison Cranwell	Sam Whyte
David Gerrish	Natalie Woodland
Philip Jessop	

Proposed Actions

Room 6 brought together 15 individuals from across Queen's University to discuss approaches to addressing SDG 6. The group identified three areas for action.

Action 1: Develop affordable, straightforward, simple technologies for advancing equitable access to water.

Faculty, students, and staff can play a key role in designing technologies to improve equitable water access. Along with sharing technical knowledge, our group proposes that the Queen's community share perspectives, knowledge, and lived experiences to understand how lack of water access affects wellbeing.

The university should provide incentives for researchers to develop affordable and low-harm technologies that help reduce water consumption, desalinate seawater, purify contaminated water, and recycle used water. Internal grants can support SDG and water related teaching and research.

Action 2: Support and expand research projects to characterize and mitigate the impact of pollutants on ecosystems.

Reducing harm and protecting the ecosystem is critical to achieving SDG 6. Queen's University should be involved in research projects to characterize and mitigate the impacts of pollutants on ecosystems.

The university should consider accomplishing the following to achieve this:

- Deepen existing and create new local and international research partnerships with conservation authorities, municipal utilities, and NGOs.
- Enumerate and advance projects with Indigenous communities.
- Catalogue research in the [Research Discovery Network](#) by SDG to build connections.
- Support the [Beaty Water Research Centre](#) projects, ensuring these efforts are accessible to younger students and communities beyond Queen's.
- Provide internal grants for SDG 6 research.

Funding will be required to catalogue projects in the Research Discovery Network and assess Beaty Water Research Centre projects for synergies. Social media and other promotional resources may also be needed to expand participation and information dissemination beyond students and faculty at Queen's.

Action 3: Expand and deepen content on SDG 6 in the curriculum and on campus events.

The university should categorize undergraduate and graduate courses by SDG and initiate new courses on SDG 6. Internal funding will be required to achieve this.

Discussion Summary

The following reflections were repeatedly made in relation to SDG 6:

- Decentralization at Queen's slows research, and research is highly siloed.
- It is important to involve communities beyond faculty (students, staff, and local community members) in research.
- Using an equity lens will ensure that the work for advancing SDG 6 is not disproportionately placed on members of equity-deserving communities.
- The well-being of people and communities should drive work on clean water and sanitation. Research should result in practical outcomes for communities.
- There was a recurring conversation about the lack of access to clean water amongst Indigenous communities. Indigenous ways of knowing need to be considered in all activities.
- Efforts should focus on equitable approaches to technology design and availability on a global level.

SDG 6 is deeply connected with the other SDGs.

A lack of access to water can result in:

- Poverty, as the water-poor expend their productive time in search of water
- Hunger, given the link between water and food security
- Poor health and wellbeing, as the lack of access to safe drinking water has been linked to diseases, emotional distress, and poor functioning of the health care system.
- Poor educational outcomes, as children in water-insecure households often spend time travelling to fetch water, preventing them from attending school or completing assignments; the lack of menstrual hygiene facilities affects girls' education.
- Unsustainable cities, as water is at the heart of sustainable environments.

- Gender inequality, as often the burden of household water supply falls on women, preventing them from engaging in other activities and creating inequalities between men and women.
- Other inequalities, as water insecurity disproportionately affects poor and marginalized populations, and reducing inequalities in access to water contributes to reducing inequalities in general.