



16

PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Moderation Team
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SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels

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

Ansha Nega Ahmed

Abebe Alemu

Anais El Amraoui (Student Facilitator)

Keith Banting

Jenny Corlett (Staff Facilitator)

Sara Franca

Ana Patricia Chuc Gamboa

Stefanie von Hlatky

Lavonne Hood

Alyssa King

Michele Leering

Leila Notash

Mona Rahman

Jonathan Rose (Moderator)

Lisa Sansom

Paulos Tesfagiorgis

Awet Weldemichael (Moderator)

Section 1: Discussion Takeaways

"Justice is something that everyone is entitled to." SDG 16 is a cross-cutting framework covering all spheres of human life. All participants agreed that SDG 16 is central to achieving the other SDGs.

In the introductory discussions, the group recognized that Queen's University was more than just a place for learning; it is an institution that matters for its community and is **responsible for shedding light on social issues**. Many of the participants in the SDG 16 room were eager to learn how SDG 16 can make an impact in our teaching or research.

The group's discussions also focused on making Queen's a stronger institution by improving its accountability and transparency. As such, targets 16.6 "Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels" and 16.7 "Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels" were pillars in the group discussions. SDG 16 is about institutions.

As such, Queen's should address issues related to SDG 16 internally as much as externally. Internal efforts should focus on strengthening transparency, engagement, and participation. External efforts should focus on Queen's and its community, reinforcing the protection of national and international institutions.

Throughout our discussions on measures to advance SDG 16, three themes remained central:

- (1) the centrality of institution,
- (2) the need for resources, and
- (3) the importance of evaluation.

The group also highlighted that SDG 16 should leave no one behind.

Section 2: Action Details

Room 16 brought together 17 individuals from across Queen's University to discuss approaches to addressing SDG 16. They identified three areas for action.

Action 1: Create an inventory of existing SDG 16 related work at Queen's

Queen's should provide a comprehensive overview of the work already being done by faculty, staff, and students with regards to SDG 16. Participants pointed out that

people often work in silos, with limited communication and lack of knowledge about SDG-related work at Queen's. Queen's should leverage and highlight some of its existing initiatives that directly support SDG goals.

The university should document the work of students and faculty by asking everyone to articulate how their work relates to the SDGs. This documentation could take the form of an inventory of Queen's scholarship, research, and teaching relevant to the SDGs. Funding should be allocated towards documentation efforts.

Queen's should find ways to ensure that SDG-related research results are shared and accessible. Queen's students and faculty would benefit from more access to SDG-related data and information for research purposes.

Action 2: Mobilize and Support Queen's Community – Rethink Research, Teaching and Engagement Incentives and Requirements

Queen's commitment to the SDGs requires the researcher to play an active role. Scholars at Queen's were historically engaged in the big debates of the day with strong relationships with policy makers in the provincial and federal governments. How can we build on this history to strengthen relationships and to leverage the research excellence at Queen's to tackle global problems? How do we encourage engagement with the government but also social movements?

To mobilize its community, Queen's needs to rethink the incentive structure for how work of faculty members is valued and promoted to recognize that fulfilling the SDGs is an integral part of our university's mandate. Queen's should develop institution-wide funding competitions to incentivize research on the SDGs.

In addition to research, Queen's should promote the SDGs in its curriculum by implementing the following:

- **Include at least one course** with content focusing on SDGs in the degree requirements for graduation (e.g., take a course from a departmentally approved list where the content overlaps or focuses on one of the SDGs).
- **Prepare a training module** on SDGs open to all students and faculty.

It is crucial to remember that "people make institutions" – i.e., institutions are only as strong as their community and people. To ensure that Queen's remains a strong

institution, it should commit to investing in its community and retaining its staff, faculty, and students (and it should also keep investing in its alumni network).

Action 3: Improve Internal Cross-Collaboration

This action involves the need to build more connections and cross-collaboration between (1) international and domestic students, (2) different departments, (3) faculty and students. To build those connections, Queen's needs to:

- **Enhance communication** on SDG activities amongst all the members of the Queen's community as it is key for transparency.
- **Organize joint faculty workshops** on the SDGs ("what can we learn from the others?").
- **Evaluate interdisciplinary competencies** frameworks to see how they can be applied to Queen's and contribute to interdisciplinary knowledge sharing and generative dialogue.
- **Promote collaboration and activities** between international and domestic students. [Queen's University International Centre \(QUIC\)](#) offers a lot of opportunities for students to work together and take part in different projects – however, there is a lack of knowledge about the ways in which students can get involved and make new connections through QUIC or other channels.

The responsibility to provide opportunities for students to make connections (in general and on the SDGs) does not only rest with QUIC. Student government organizations (especially the AMS, ASUS, or other faculty governance) have the potential to take a more active, inclusive role and engage in participatory decision-making through outreach to groups that have not always been represented in these organizations.

SDG 16 could be used as a potential framework to provide structure and guidance to students for increased engagement. [Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre](#) and new student spaces such as the [Yellow House](#) also create safe meeting spaces for all students.

Section 3: Additional Actions

Many additional actions were proposed during the discussion on SDG 16 – some were not explored in depth because of time limitations. They could be further explored in future SDG 16 implementation efforts at Queen’s.

These ideas include:

- **Engaging Queen’s Law School** in a discussion of 16.3 “Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all”. The School should discuss the implications of this indicator for what is being taught and researched, and for community/university partnerships.
- **Leveraging existing global partnerships** and learning from good external practices for achieving SDG 16.
- **Reducing the divide between practitioners and scholars.** This means questioning what constitutes professional knowledge and actionable professional knowledge.
- **Linking the SDGs to the [African Union "Agenda 2063"](#):** How do the SDG and African Union agendas relate to each other? What can Queen’s learn from the African Union's work and indicators?
- **Further supporting existing programs** that advance SDG 16 such as [Scholars at Risk](#) and the [Global Skills Opportunity](#) program.