



Sandra S. Rincón

Helen Etheridge



Agenda

1. The Role of Higher Education in Advancing the SDGs.
2. Research Findings: Social Responsibility and Organizational Commitment through SDGs.
3. Case Study Presentation: Alumni UK and the SDGs
4. Interactive Session
5. Summary of Practical Takeaways



New Opportunities for Engagement



- Ethical Global Citizen Education
- Internationalization for Society
- Education for Sustainability



Youth and Social Impact



- ✓ Gen Z = 2 billion young people globally
- ✓ Tech savvy: First fully digital native generation
- ✓ Nonstop crises: Great Recession (2008), civil unrest, climate crisis, the pandemic
- ✓ Values: DEI, social causes, environment activism



- 402 Institutions have signed the accord
- 184 from 40 countries participated in last report

23% North America

2% Africa & LATAM

Results

What's the current progress status on embedding the SDGs within different operational areas?

1. Most institutions were **'emerging'** across all four operational areas. (Not yet established)
2. They're struggling with:
 - Budget (92%),
 - Staff Capacity (69%),
 - Senior Management Support (44%)
 - Training (44%)



Top 3 most and least influenced SDGs



Figure 3: The three most influenced SDGs at reporting institutions in the last 12 months *



Figure 4: The three least influenced SDGs at reporting institutions in the last 12 months *



Survey



- School of Economics and Management
- Graduates of Bachelor's Programs between 2015–2021
- 2,400 emails of which 52 % opened the email
- 150 started survey / 84 completed it

Overview

International Business Administration

- ✓ English
- ✓ Study abroad option
- ✓ 52% respondents

Bedrijfseconomie

- ✓ Dutch
- ✓ No Study abroad option
- ✓ 48% respondents

Total = 84 respondents

98% = under 30 years old

88% = Dutch nationality

44% = studied abroad

70% = took a course on managing cultural diversity

67% = have jobs working or collaborating internationally

Willingness to Contribute (WTC)

Activity	International Business Administration	Bedrijfseconomie	Total Alumni of both groups
Would donate to Tilburg University in general	30%	13%	21%
Would donate to research in general	21%	13%	17%
Would donate to student scholarship fund	39%	23%	32%
Would donate to research projects for socially responsible causes	49%	41%	45%
Would volunteer to support local alumni activities	74%	59%	67%
Would volunteer to support student activities	79%	74%	77%

Summary of Results



- ✓ Alumni's WTC showed that 56 % of young alumni (between ages 20 and 30 years old) would donate to the university: for a general or specific objective purpose.
- ✓ 81 % of alumni would donate time supporting either alumni or student.
- ✓ 88 % of all survey participants would donate either money or time to the university.



Alumni UK



Introduction to Alumni UK



The global network connecting UK-educated graduates

A powerful global network

Connects international alumni who champion the UK as a leader in education, innovation, and culture.

Driving collaboration and inclusion

Fosters professional development, partnerships, and engagement on equality, diversity, and global challenges.

Evidence-based impact

Uses alumni insights to inform policy, strengthen soft power, and enhance the UK's international reputation.

Real-world outcomes

Boosts international student recruitment, graduate success, and long-term global partnerships.

A Growing Global Community



1 Reach & Engagement



138,000 alumni engaged through the network



629,000 meaningful engagements since Nov 2022



120+ countries connected

2 Professional Development & Engagement

Over **16,000** alumni joined our most recent flagship *Alumni UK Live* virtual event, alongside a growing calendar of online and in-person activities supporting career growth and networking.

100+ events a year

3 Global Impact Projects



Disability & Inclusion Network champions accessibility and inclusive practice worldwide.

-  *Alumni Ambassadors* deliver projects tackling inequality and promoting economic empowerment.
-  *Climate Action Grants* support alumni-led initiatives reaching **200,000+** beneficiaries globally.

4 Research, Insights & Recognition



Alumni Voices Survey: **5,822 responses** from **120+ countries**, showing strong positive perceptions of UK study and career value.



Study UK Alumni Awards: Celebrating outstanding alumni with **1,400 applications** from nearly **100 countries** last year.

Our vision: Alumni as Changemakers



- Alumni UK empowers graduates to apply their UK-acquired knowledge and networks to **address pressing global challenges**.
- Through funding and mentoring of **alumni-led projects**, the programme transforms learning into **tangible social impact**.
- **Supporting communities** to advance towards the SDGs.

SDGs

SDG 4 – Quality Education

SDG5 – Gender Equality

SDG8 – Decent Work & Economic Growth

SDG10 – Reduced Inequality

SDG13 – Climate Action

About the Alumni UK SDG Ambassadors scheme



- Provide grants, mentoring, and network support for impactful, scalable projects.
- Projects focus on inclusion, gender equality, and community empowerment.
- Ambassadors also host Alumni UK events, create digital content, and speak at conferences and events.
- Together, they turn UK learning into real-world impact, advancing the UN SDGs.
- The 2025–26 grant projects collectively engage 300 participants and reach 3,000 beneficiaries



Example 1: Job Search Platform
SDG 8 – Decent Work & Economic Growth



Led by a UK-alumnus from Egypt, this uses AI tools + a workbook to help youth (especially UK graduates) find entry-level jobs.

The project's goals are to:

- Create an advanced AI search platform that can rapidly tailor job opportunities to a job-seeker's specific experience profile and skills.
- Match graduates to suitable roles
- Give users more autonomy and effectiveness in identifying relevant job opportunities by providing a highly personalised and efficient tool.



Example 2: Virtual Workshops on Underrecognised Cancers in Young Adults

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequality



Led by UK Alumna in India, the project aims to:

- Raise awareness of underrecognised cancers (lung, ovarian, thyroid, colorectal) in young adults, especially women.
- Deliver virtual workshops with experts, survivors, and policymakers to promote early detection and prevention.
- Focus on youth and disadvantaged communities, linking health and environmental awareness.
- Provide a scalable model drawing on UK education and alumni networks to advance global cancer advocacy.



Climate Action Grants 25/26



Out of **300** applications,

- 20 outstanding projects from 12 countries were selected for their creativity, scalability, and impact.
- Engaging 86 stakeholders, reaching 202,000 beneficiaries and involving 4,300 participants.

Alumni are advancing climate action and sustainable development—strengthening resilience, promoting Indigenous knowledge, turning waste into clean energy, supporting low-carbon solutions, empowering communities, and tackling issues from economic empowerment to ecosystem restoration.



Disability inclusion



The Alumni UK Disability Inclusion Network champions accessibility and inclusive practice worldwide, offering insights into the lived experiences of disabled international students.

- Research into the experiences of international students with disabilities → fed back to UK higher education sector
- Disability Inclusion Steering Group → 13 alumni selected from 154 applications
- Launch of the Disability Inclusion Community of Practice
- Projects focusing on policy advocacy, research, professional development and networking
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities event



- Focus on gender
- Communities of practice
- Sector and regional focus
- Storytelling
- Increased engagement with universities
- Improved communications with alumni
- Final year international students and pre-departure engagement





Your Turn

1. How can your program engage with the SDGs or topics on sustainability to foster students or alumni support?
2. What can you implement or want to implement from this session upon returning to the office?



Takeaways

1. Your alumni are change-makers, spotlight them.
2. See list of many ways they can contribute.
3. Purpose drives participation — alumni engage where they feel personal connection.



Alumni's Contribution



Education & Research

- *Brand Ambassadors
- *Liaisons for partner universities
- *Recruiters
- *Advisors
- *Mentors
- *Life-long learners
- *Co-authors
- *Innovators

Serving Society

- *Volunteers
- *Employers
- *Entrepreneurs
- *Fundraisers
- *Investors
- *Donors



Děkuji Thank You

Sandra S. Rincón

srincon2020@gmail.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sandrarincon/>

Helen Etheridge

Helen.Etheridge@britishcouncil.org

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/helen-etheridge-13974370/>