



Mapping workforce contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals: a tool to enhance staff capacity and inspire action

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The United Nations' Agenda 2030 provides a framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve peace and prosperity for people and planet, now and into the future⁽¹⁾. The United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition emphasises that food and nutrition are key levers for optimising both human and planetary health and that individuals working in food, nutrition and health play an essential role in contributing to the SDGs^(2,3). This project aimed to (i) map the work being done by staff and higher degree students at Monash University's Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food and its alignment with the SDGs, and (ii) assess the impact of this process on workforce capacity to embed the SDGs in future work activities. Three mapping workshops; one pilot, one in-person and one online, were conducted (n = 28), beginning with a short expert-led seminar about the SDGs before participants engaged in an interactive activity to record their work activities (research, education or engagement) relating to the SDGs. Mapping data were analysed to determine which SDGs were being prioritised and in what type of activities. To determine the impact on workforce capacity, participants completed pre- and post-workshop surveys that assessed their knowledge of and confidence regarding the SDGs. From the three workshops, 129 work activities were described, each linked to one or more of the SDGs. Of those, 41% were education, 36% were research, and 23% were engagement activities. Work activities spanned all 17 of the SDGs, with the most commonly aligned being Goal 3 Good Health and Wellbeing (53% of work activities), Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities (37% of work activities), Goal 4 Quality Education (36% of work activities), Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production (34% of work activities), and Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals (27% of work activities). The pre- and post-workshop surveys indicated increased staff knowledge and confidence related to the SDGs. The percentage of participants that could correctly identify the number of SDGs increased from 43% to 96%, and the percentage of participants that recognised the correct aim of the SDGs increased from 43% to 86%. Regarding confidence in talking about the SDGs, the percentage of staff who indicated that they 'avoid talking about them' or are 'not confident' decreased from 39% to 4%, and the number of staff who were confident talking about the SDGs 'in general terms' increased from 39% to 75%. Nutrition professionals are well-placed to support progress towards each of the SDGs. Workshops such as these provide an opportunity to increase workforce capacity to discuss, share and relate their work to the SDGs and provide a periodic pulse-check to identify opportunities for greater contribution to this urgent, global Agenda.

Keywords: sustainable development goals; planetary health; workforce capacity; mapping exercise

Ethics Declaration

Yes

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