

SSMU Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Plan

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Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

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1. Description

Globally, the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a shared path for the achievement of peace and prosperity for all people and the planet. At the core of the Agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which call for a global partnership between all nations to achieve a more sustainable future. They promote a multilateral, interconnected action plan to tackle some of the most pressing challenges threatening our existence and overall planetary health.

The SSMU commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights, social justice and environmental protection, and to groups, programs and activities that are devoted to the well-being of disadvantaged groups. The SSMU also recognizes the holistic nature of sustainability and the importance of addressing environmental, social and economic viability. According to the SSMU Sustainability Policy, sustainability does not refer exclusively to environmental considerations, but also encompasses sustainability in regards to justice and equity.

The SSMU therefore recognizes the importance of interdisciplinary action when pursuing sustainability and human rights. The pursuit of the SDGs is a collaborative one so the implementation of a strategic SDG plan will hopefully develop sustainable action in the SSMU context while also helping to achieve the 2030 Agenda in the global context.

2. Scope

This plan applies to the members of SSMU, the sustainability commissioners, the president, SSMU clubs and SSMU services.

3. Definitions

SDG: the letters SDG stand for Sustainable Development Goals. The SDG's have been developed and refined by the United Nations in 2015. SDGs are sustainable goals that the UN hopes to reach by 2030. The 17 SDGs call for a global action in several different areas, namely: poverty reduction, hunger eradication, protection of the environment, peace and justice, sustainable economies, etc. It is important to remember SDGs are englobing actions that are intersectional. As such, one action to improve one specific SDG will have an impact on other SDGs. It is widely recognized that in order to achieve SDG's, creativity, knowledge, technology and financial resources are needed.



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From <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

SDG 1: No poverty

SDG 2 : Zero hunger

SDG 3: Good health and well-being

SDG 4 : Quality Education

SDG 5 : Gender equality

SDG 6 : Clean water and sanitation

SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

SDG 9: Industry, innovation, and infrastructure

SDG 10 : Reduce inequality

SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production



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SDG 13 : Climate action

SDG 14 : Life below water

SDG 15 : Life on land

SDG 16 : Peace and justice, strong institutions

SDG 17 : Partnership to achieve the goals

SSMU: The Students' Society of McGill University.

UN: An organization founded in 1945. The UN and its work are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter, including fundamental human rights, equal rights and conditions of justice.

Goals: A specific target to be reached within a defined time period. Goals may involve targets and indicators used to frame agendas and policies.

Action items: Specific measures and concrete steps that may be undertaken at the SSMU in accordance with the SSMU plan.

4. Context

4.1. At SSMU

The SSMU formally ratified the UN SDGs with an 82.9% YES vote in February of 2017¹. They recognized that as a student body filled with future holders of significant economic, social, and political power; if SSMU seeks to make tangible change within the realm of sustainability, it is essential for SSMU to engrain the importance of the SDGs into their students. As an international student body, the SSMU became the first ever educational institute to formally ratify the UN SDGs.

There are also a multitude of active sustainability student groups, such as ESG McGill, Girls for Ghana, and ECOLE, who currently uphold the values of the SDGs in their mandates. The SSMU also employs students in various positions, most notably the Sustainability Commissioners, who are informally working to achieve these goals through their commitment to sustainable actions. The SSMU Environment Committee also works towards the achievement of sustainable development within the SSMU. The SSMU also has an Environment Fund, or the Green Fund, that is a source of financial

¹<https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/Motion-Regarding-the-Formal-Ratification-of-the-United-Nations-Sustainable-Development-Goals-2017-02-20.pdf>



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assistance for sustainable initiatives led by student groups or for initiatives to promote a culture of sustainability on campus. Finally, many students are in programs that recognize the importance of the implementation of the SDGs on a formal level. The SSMU recognizes that there are nuances and critiques regarding the UN Sustainability goals and takes a holistic and rounded approach to these goals at the SSMU.

4.2. At McGill University

The Sustainability Projects Fund² (SPF), championed by and advocated for by students is housed under the McGill Office of Sustainability. It aims to build a culture of sustainability across the campuses of McGill through the development and seed funding of interdisciplinary projects. The SPF is the largest dedicated campus sustainability fund of its kind in Canada. Since 2010, \$10.1 million has been allocated towards sustainability initiatives. The SDG Plan can encourage the SSMU to further utilize and expand student engagement and input.

Ultimately, the SDG plan will aim to further increase and encourage student involvement at McGill and will improve the implementation of student-led initiatives in the wider McGill context.

5. Framework

The SDG plan will be implemented for a period of five years, from the 1st of May 2023 to the 1st of May 2028. The SDG plan will focus on action items.

6. Advocacy / Promotion / Communication

6.1. University Advocacy

These plans will be presented to the McGill administration in order to emphasize student support for action on the 17 SDGs. We will present how they fortify our current initiatives and how they can use their engagement to encourage support for the integration of sustainable practices into curricula. Our actions will present a strong argument for McGill's funds to be used in alignment with the SDGs such as divesting from fossil fuels.

² <https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FY21-SPF-Annual-Report-2021-10-14.pdf?x21981>



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6.2. Campus Advocacy

This policy will require the collaboration of various clubs and services on campus including but not limited to the Flat Bike Collective and Midnight Kitchen. In order to involve motivated and energize students, we will seek to communicate with students through multiple mediums to ensure our network spans as far as possible.

6.3. External Advocacy

Advocacy efforts beyond McGill for the SDG plan may include joining a global platform of universities and other higher education organizations committed to working together, and collaboration with other relevant organizations, in support of the SDGs locally and globally. An example of a student union coalition for the SDGs includes the University Global Coalition³.

Additionally, McGill student groups can refer to the SDG plan when calling for sustainable development, justice and equity at the local and global levels. For example, the IRSAM Youth Advisory Delegation (IYAD), who holds consultative status with the UN ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council), can refer to the SDG plan when representing the community's youth voices to governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at the UN to increase youth representation in policy-making.

7. Mandates

The President of SSMU, the Vice-President (Sustainability and Operations), the Sustainability Commissioners and the SSMU Environment Committee will collaborate to implement the various components of the SDG policy. They will also play a lead role in advocating and promoting the policy to the other student groups on campus. The President, the Vice-President (Sustainability and Operations), and Sustainability Commissioners shall meet monthly to track the measurable, effective progress and implementation of the SDG plan. The SDG plan will also be referred to when SSMU Executives are developing plans to incorporate sustainability into their portfolios. The rest of the executive committee will work with those mentioned above to ensure the SDG Plan's implementation. The President, the Vice-President (Sustainability and Operations) and Sustainability Commissioners are responsible for bringing the SDG plan to the Legislative Council for renewal.

The SSMU and its representatives may undertake the following action items in accordance with the SDG Plan:

³ <https://universityglobalcoalition.org/>



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SDG 1: No Poverty

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 1 (No Poverty) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Vice-President (Finance) will create a peer support program that will help the SSMU with their personal finances, such as tax assistance, student aid applications, and applying to scholarships.
- The Vice-President (Internal Affairs) will support and help increase awareness of off-campus need-based financial aid for students such as grants, bursaries, and aid.
- The Vice-President (University Affairs) will support and help increase awareness of on-campus need based financial aid for students (grants, bursaries, aid).
- The continued prioritization of student employment when recruiting new SSMU full-time and part-time staff.
- The Vice-President (External Affairs) may develop partnerships with Comité des Citoyen(ne)s Milton-Parc (CCMP) to support the Milton-Parc community.
- The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) will work to support local organizations and groups within the community that work to address poverty.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Office of the President will ensure the renewal and expansion of the SSMU Grocery program.
- The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) may provide support for student group food security initiatives such as the Midnight Kitchen.
- The Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability) may support the restoration of campus crops and bolster their setup.
- The Office of the Vice-President (External) may provide support and raise awareness around volunteering opportunities in Montreal food banks.
- The Vice-President (University Affairs) may advocate to McGill University for cultural meal options on campus, as well as the expansion of vegetarian and vegan offerings.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:



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- The support and expansion of pre-existing wellness programs and initiatives at the SSMU such as those outlined in the Mental Health Policy.⁴
- The Vice-President (University Affairs) and the SSMU Mental Health Commissioners may build awareness regarding pre-existing university resources such as:
 - The McGill University local wellness advisors, here to help students challenged by mental health issues.
 - The McGill nutritionists that can be accessed for free through the wellness hub. If people are thinking of changing their diets (ex. going vegan) they can meet with them to discuss proper nutrients.
 - The support and advertisement for wellness resources at McGill university, such as the McGill gym yoga classes.
- The Office of the Vice-President (Internal Affairs) may support and advertise the wellness resources in the Milton-Parc and Plateau area. In the context of achieving SDG3, the SSMU may work to achieve discounts and sponsorships for SSMU members.
- The Office of the Vice-President (Student Life) may support the SSMU in providing access to online mental health services.
- The advertisement and support of a Wellness Pantry supporting sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- The Vice-President (University Affairs) can advocate to McGill Student Services for the establishment of a peer support system for health system navigation in Québec (especially for international students and SSMU members arriving from another place than the province of Québec) and compile resources to navigate the health system in Québec.
- The Vice-President (University Affairs) may support International Student Services in their democratization of the Québec health system services for international students.

SDG 4: Quality Education

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 4 (Quality Education) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability) may support the enhancement of the mini courses or other educational modules provided by SSMU.
- The President may collaborate with McGill Enrolment and Student Affairs to reach out to underrepresented groups.
 - Running workshops at public schools.
 - Mentor programs.
 - Partner with McGill open house.

⁴ <https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SSMU-Mental-Health-Policy.pdf?x21981>



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SDG 5: Gender Equality

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Office of the Vice-President (University Affairs) may continue to support and strengthen the menstrual health policy.
- The Vice-President (University Affairs) may organize panels with women, Transgender and other gender-diverse professors and leaders in the McGill community.
- The Office of the Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability) can support the implementation of a Wellness Pantry supporting sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.
- The support and assistance of student groups and clubs at McGill university that aim to represent women in underrepresented environments (such as “women in international relations”, or “women in engineering”).
- The Office of the Vice-President (Internal Affairs) and the Vice-President (University Affairs) shall support the continued implementation of gender inclusive language at SSMU.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Office of the Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability) may support the continued installation of complementary water bottle refill stations around campus and the distribution of reusable and durable non-plastic water bottles around campus.
- The Vice-President (External Affairs) may offer support, resources or assistance to students experiencing Clean Water and Sanitation issues with regards to their housing.
- The Vice-President (External Affairs) shall support and may provide information and educational resources to community initiatives, especially those in support of Indigenous communities and stakeholders, aiming to protect bodies of water and make clean water more accessible.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:



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- The Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability) will explore options and means to implement renewable energy within the SSMU building and support clean energy operations. This project may apply for the Green Fund for funding.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The SSMU shall support working conditions of its employees.
- The SSMU may compile resources for students to support their economic health and financial security.
- The Office of the President shall ensure the development of the SSMU EDI Plan to support equity, diversity and inclusion among its workforce and in its working conditions.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Vice-President (University Affairs) may advocate for the installation of more green walls on campus (ex. the green wall at the McGill gymnasium).
- The Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability) may examine sustainable infrastructure for the SSMU.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The President and Vice-President (University Affairs) shall continue advocacy around the McGill McGill Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan⁵ and the McGill Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism.⁶
- The support of equity, diversity and inclusion, especially through the development and upholding of the points outlined in the SSMU EDI Plan.
- The employment of an anti-racist based approach to pervasive and systemic anti-Black racism within the SSMU and beyond.
 - The continued commitment to and support for Indigeneity and Indigenous peoples, including the support for and amplification of Indigenous led initiatives.

⁵ https://www.mcgill.ca/equity/files/equity/mcgill_strategic_edi_plan_2020-20251.pdf

⁶ https://www.mcgill.ca/provost/files/provost/action_plan_to_address_anti-black_racism.pdf



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- The continued commitment to and support for the Francophone community and Francophone rights.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The installation and maintenance of metro and bus discounts for McGill students and SSMU members, and partnerships with sustainable transportation such as Montreal's city Bixi public company.
- The advocacy to the City of Montreal for urban development with an emphasis on transit and accessibility.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- Support for responsible consumption and production in line with the SSMU Climate Justice policy⁷.
- The continued implementation and prioritization of sustainable and ethical purchasing practices at the SSMU.

SDG 13: Climate Action

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 13 (Climate Action) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Vice-President (University Affairs) to advocate for additional metro and bus discounts for McGill students and SSMU members and other relevant partnerships.
- The Vice-President (University Affairs) may advocate for the installation of more green walls on campus (ex. the green wall at the McGill gymnasium).
- The Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) shall continue to support and coordinate Trash2Treasure.
- The Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability) will explore options and means to implement renewable energy within the SSMU building and support clean energy operations. This project may apply for the Green Fund for funding.

⁷ <https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Climate-Justice-Policy.pdf?x21981>



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- The President and Vice-President (University Affairs) may continue advocacy for climate action on the part of McGill University.

SDG 14: Life Below Water

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 14 (Life Below Water) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Office of the Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability) may support the education around environmental considerations relating to water, land and housing including educational initiatives.
- The Vice-President (External Affairs) shall support and may provide resources to community initiatives, especially those in support of Indigenous communities and stakeholders, aiming to protect bodies of water and make clean water more accessible.

SDG 15: Life on Land

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 15 (Life on Land) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Vice-President (Student Life) may continue support for SSMU clubs including but not limited to McGill Outdoors Club (MOC) and Little Forests McGill.
- The Vice-President (External Affairs) shall promote knowledge regarding foraging and Indigenous land practices in Montreal.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The Vice-President (University Affairs) shall support the Legal Information Clinic at McGill and provide resources and awareness around students' rights.
- The Office of the President and the electoral officers of the SSMU may support and provide resources to students to encourage and facilitate student engagement in SSMU elections.
- The SSMU shall uphold values of justice within its own institutions and work to dismantle systemic discrimination including systemic racism, sexism, ableism, in line with the development and upholding of policies such as the SSMU EDI Plan and the Position on Institutions of Public Safety.



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SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

The SSMU SDG plan aims to achieve the goals of SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by a set of different actions and activities, that can include but are not limited to:

- The President and Vice-President (Operations and Sustainability) may work towards the creation of an SDG Working Group or Committee at the SSMU.
- The Office of the Vice-President (Internal Affairs) shall work towards the strengthening of sponsorships that are aligned with this vision.
- In implementing the SSMU SDG Plan and working towards sustainability, the SSMU shall pursue Indigenous partnerships and perspectives as well those of other marginalized groups. The SSMU shall further emphasize diverse perspectives and contributions in opposition to pervasive environmental racism.

8. Reporting and Accountability

The SDG plan will exist under the President's portfolio. As such, the SSMU President will report the activities of the SDG plan to the Legislative Council once a year, during the Winter semester.

9. Appendices

9.1. Appendix A

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>