A CLOSE LOOK AT SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING IN DISTANCE HIGHER EDUCATION

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Who we are …?

CAMPUS SUSTENTÁVEL UAb

- UAb Sustainable Campus Group
- Established in 2021
- Direct supervision of the rector

What is our vision?

Planning and Administrations

Community engagement

Operation

Vision

Assessment and Reporting

Education and Research

A

B

C

D

E

Introduction

Higher Education Institutions and Sustainability

"shaping knowledge, skills, values and mindsets"

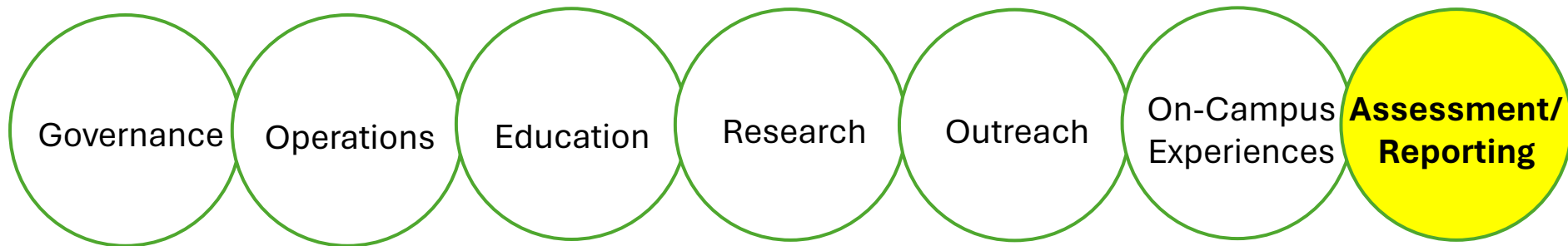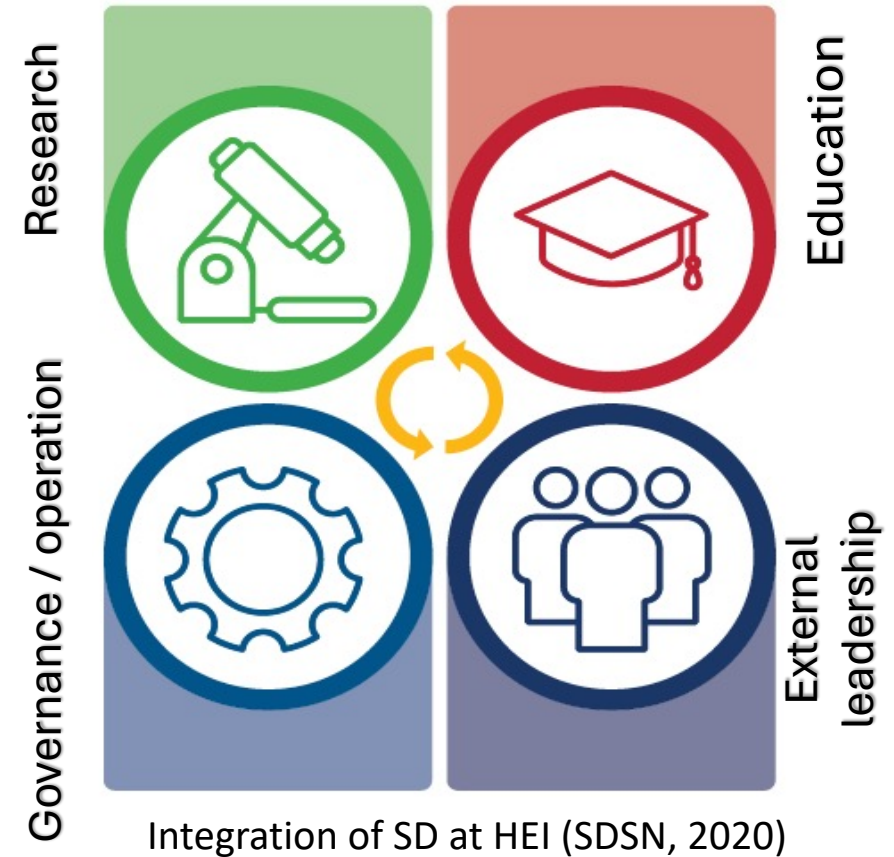Source: https://www.unicef.org/sustainable-development-goals

... significant contributors to the promotion of Sustainable Development, due to their **catalyst** role ....
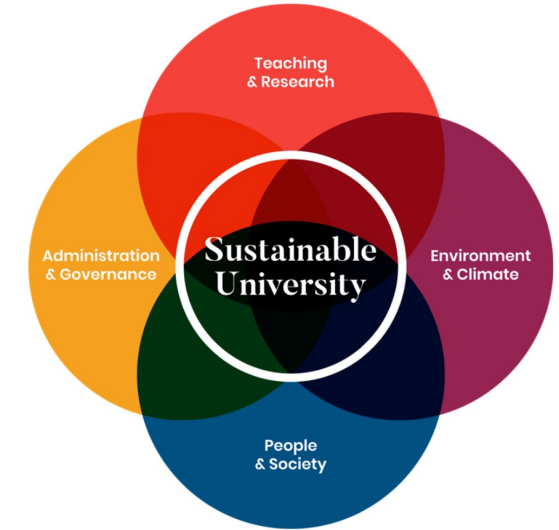
Current trends

Whole-Institution Approach

… not just a matter of teaching and adding new content to courses and trainings…

- ✓ as **experiential places** of learning for SD
- ✓ The institution itself functions as a **role model** for the learners

Integration of SD at HEI (SDSN, 2020)

Research | Education | Governance / operation | External leadership

Governance | Operations | Education | Research | Outreach | On-Campus Experiences | **Assessment/ Reporting**

Transition to a sustainable HEI

UNEP Sustainable University Framework (2021)

*"...**Communicate** your performance transparently and accessibly to stakeholders..."*
(UNEP, 2021)

Gaps

Lack of **dedicated** sustainability reporting frameworks for HEIs…

Providing reports that are not **comparable**

Lack of sustainability **documentation** scenarios

Less urgency due to the lower external pressure by stakeholders or society

GRI

stars
a program of **aashe**

THE IMPACT RANKINGS

Distance-teaching HEIs…

the primary setting and **nature of their activities** *differ from conventional HEIs.*
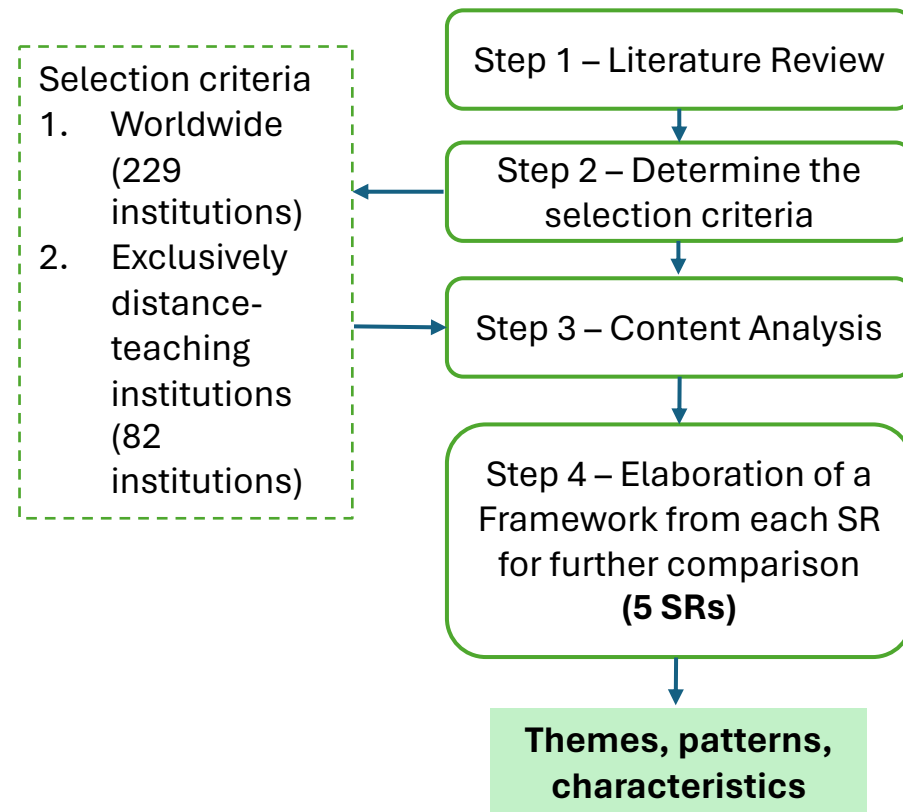
Aim

to explore how sustainability is being reported by distance-teaching HEI:

- exploring the current trends

- identifying the themes most reported

Methods

Diagnostic Approach | Content Analysis of SR from distance-teaching HEIs

Selection criteria
1. Worldwide (229 institutions)
2. Exclusively distance-teaching institutions (82 institutions)

Step 1 – Literature Review

↓

Step 2 – Determine the selection criteria

↓

Step 3 – Content Analysis

↓

Step 4 – Elaboration of a Framework from each SR for further comparison **(5 SRs)**

↓

Themes, patterns, characteristics

Figure 1: preparation method for the study.

Representative networks of Distance-teaching institutions worldwide:

International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)

Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU)

Additional web search

Results

Themes or metrics reported

Table1: Commonalities among reported metrics

Open University of the Philippines		University of London	Open University UK	Open University of Sri Lanka	FernUni UniDistance Suisse
SDG 3 (5 metrics)		Energy and Carbon	Energy and Carbon Management	Carbon and Energy	Energy
SDG 4 (3 metrics)		Reduce the Juice: connect / Knowledge Quarter Partnership	Go Green	Engagement and Raising Awareness	Sustainable Engagement
SDG 5 (3 metrics)		Waste and Resources	Waste and Recycling	Waste / Wastewater	Network
SDG 11 (2 metrics)		Catering	Food	Catering	Organization
SDG 13 (1 metric)		Biodiversity	Grounds and Landscape	Biodiversity / Sustainable Farming	Distance Learning System
SDG 17 (2 metrics)		Water	Water Consumption	Sustainable Procurement	
		Conferencing and Events	Teaching and Research	Education for Sustainable Development	Teaching / Research
		University of London Worldwide	Travel	Travel	Mobility
		University of London in Paris	Construction and Refurbishment	Sustainable Construction	
		Accreditation	Cleaning		

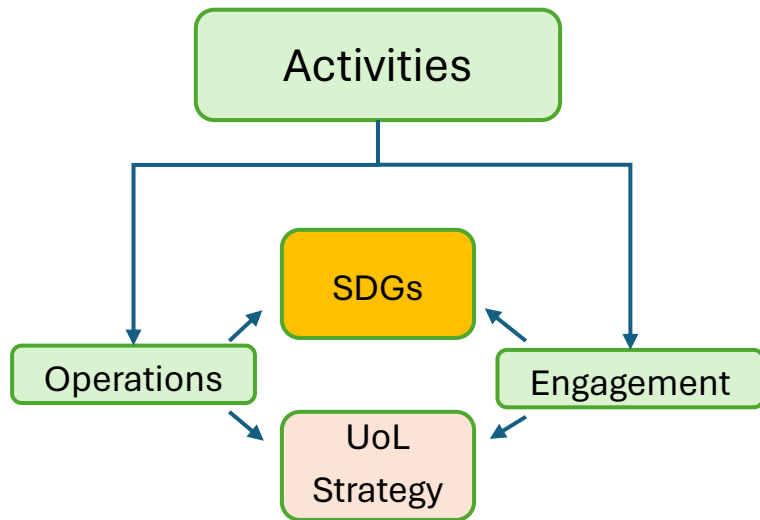# Results
Outcomes from Content Analysis

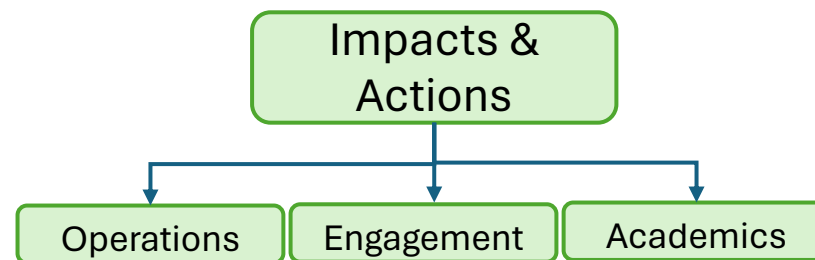Figure 2: The University of London's SR Framework

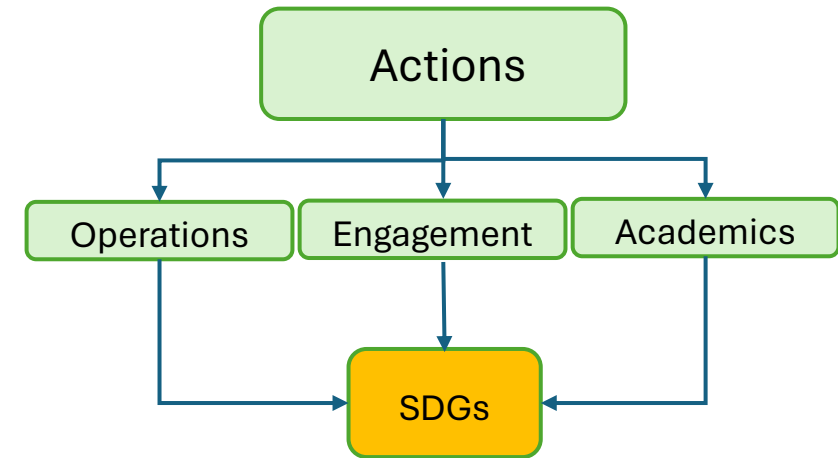Figure 3: The Open University's SPR Framework

Figure 4: The Open University of Sri Lanka's SR Framework

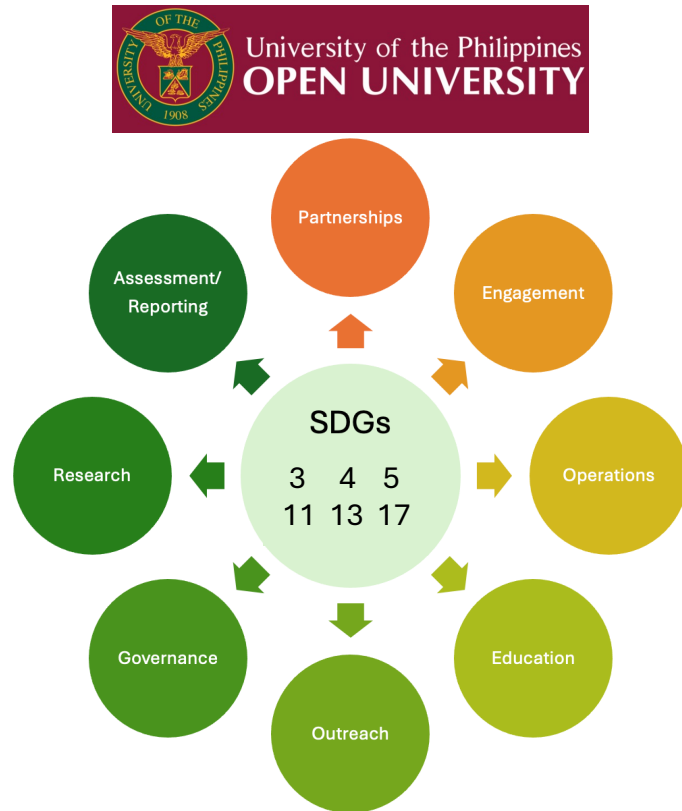# Results

Outcomes from Content Analysis
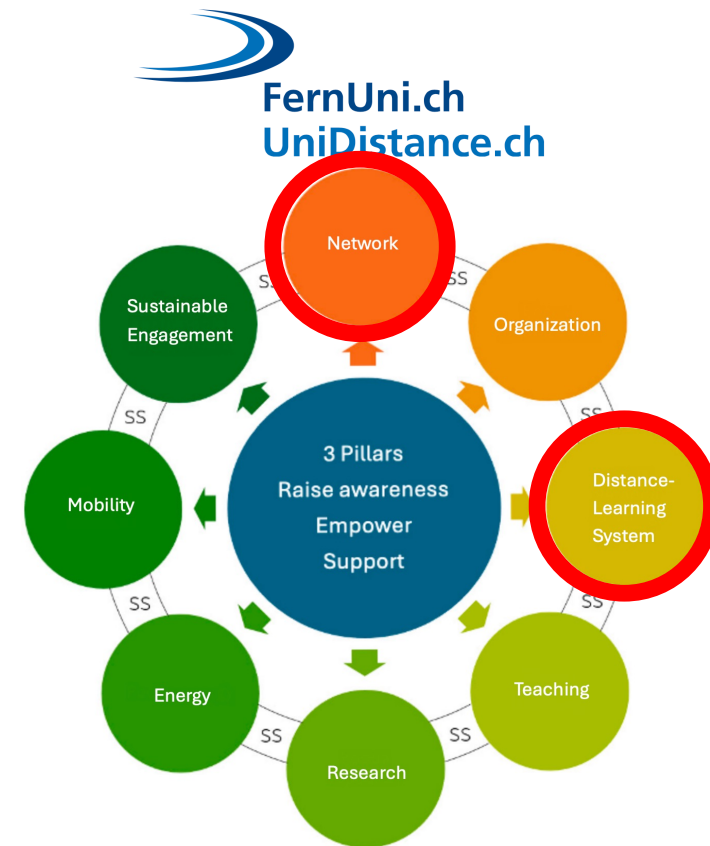

Figure 5: The UPOU's SR Framework

Figure 6: The UniDistance Suisse's SR Framework

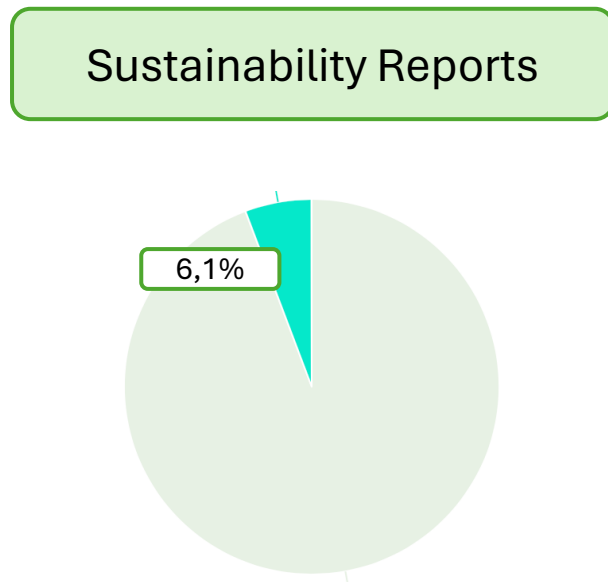# Quantitative analysis

Sustainability Reports

6,1%

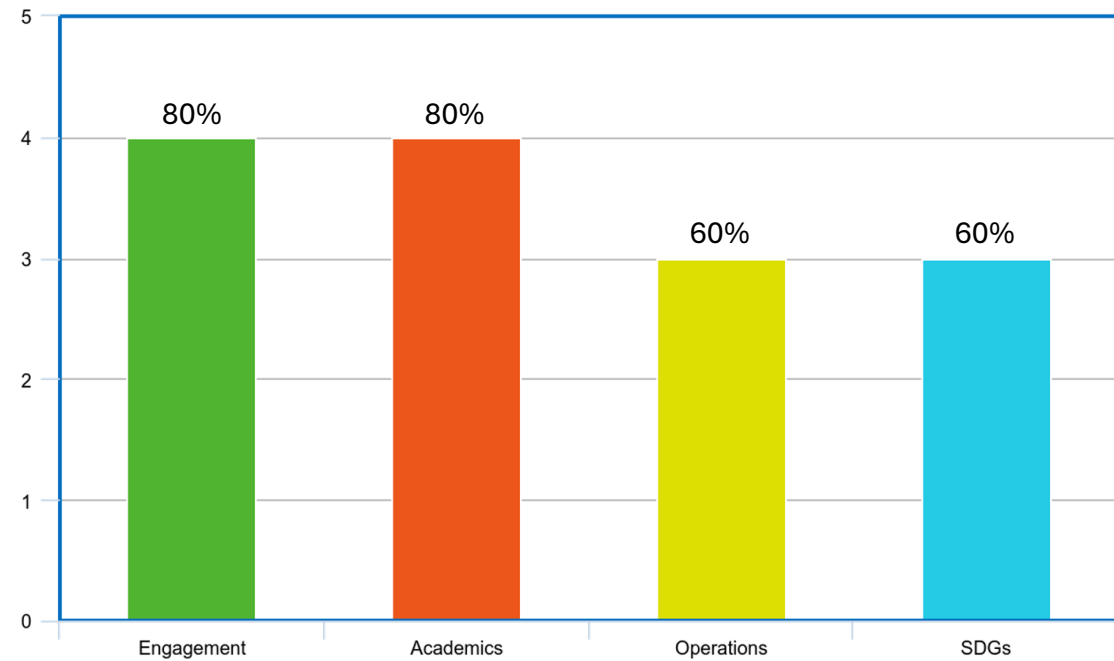Figure 7: Percentage of HEIs reporting sustainability.
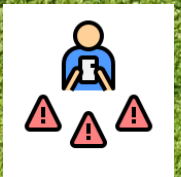

Figure 8: Most reported categories.

Final Remarks and Conclusions

Strategy Alignment (Uni London)

SDGs Alignment (even as a secondary theme)

Shared themes (Engagement, Academics and Operations)

How to make a progress:

- **Networks** associated with distance-teaching HEIs need to lead their associate members to report their sustainability initiatives.

- A dedicated framework, alongside a supporting "**implementation manual**".

Thank you for your attention