



Universities as Social Innovation Anchor Institutions

Richard Hazenberg, University of Northampton

Overview

- Purpose of today is to explore what it means to become a **social innovation focused** university.
 - Specifically:
 - Overview of the University
 - Social Innovation & HE
 - Sustainability & SDGs
 - Strategic Approach
 - Impact Hexagon
 - Times Higher Impact Rankings
 - Practical examples:
 - Research
 - Teaching
 - Community engagement
 - Moving Forwards

The graphic is a circular arrangement of 17 icons, each representing one of the Sustainable Development Goals. The icons are color-coded and include symbols such as a dove, a globe, a hand, a person, a fish, a sun, a person with a checkmark, a person with a minus sign, a person with a plus sign, a person with a gear, a person with a bar chart, a person with a map, a person with a lightbulb, a person with a leaf, a person with a water drop, a person with a infinity symbol, a person with a building, and a person with a hand. The text "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS" is written in blue capital letters at the bottom right of the circle.





University of
Northampton



Hello
Waterside

*Changemaker
Campus*

*Committed to Social
Innovation*

*Community
Anchor Institution*

*21st Century
University*

*Community work
informs teaching*



Social Innovation & HE

Defining Social Innovation

- Not a **singular definition of SI**, as it's such a diffuse concept.
 - SI represents **new ways** of developing/delivering products/services that deliver social impacts & catalyse **change in society** (Heiscala, 2007).
- Represents the growing focus on **hybridity** in society.
- '**De-powering**' of processes to allow genuine community engagement. Beneficiaries are the experts & should be involved as co-producers.
- SI occurs across all sectors of the economy.



- **21st Century Higher Education Institutions** need to be more than just research & teaching focused institutions:
 - Support the **local economy**
 - **Influence policy** locally, nationally & globally
 - Contribute towards the 2030 **Sustainable Development Goals**
 - **Co-create** with communities, businesses & practitioners
- Social innovation presents universities with an opportunity to leverage their resources in a post-Covid world to drive **sustainable growth & impact**.
- HEI impact is now being recognised in **global impact rankings**:
 - [Times Higher Impact Rankings](#)

SI/SE Impact Hexagon



HEIs should achieve ALL of these six outcome pillars where possible



The UN SDGs

SDGs Overview

- The Sustainable Development Goals provide **17 impact areas** of focus to run to 2030.
 - They provide a “...a shared blueprint for peace & prosperity for people & the planet, now & into the future” (UN 2021).
 - Build upon the **Millennium Development Goals** that preceded them & **Agenda 21** before that.
 - 17 SDGs, **169 targets**, one holistic pathway to sustainability.

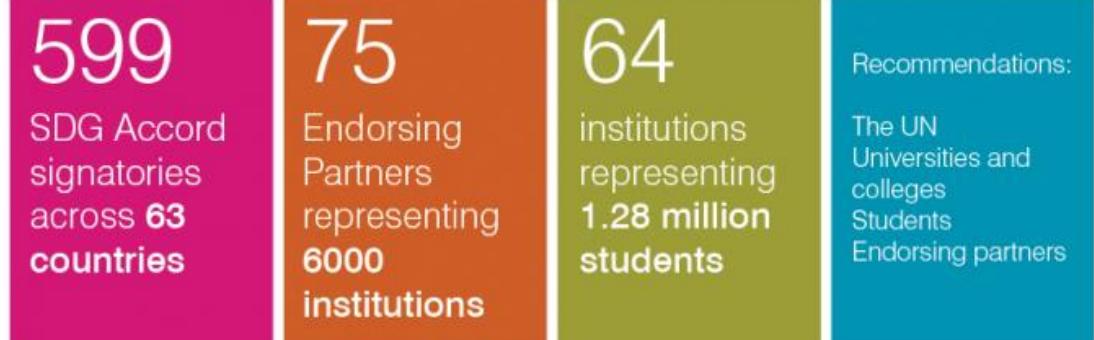


SDG Accord

The Accord demonstrates the critical role that education plays in the SDG agenda, & the work of institutions such as UON in helping to achieve this.

The SDG Accord

Post-16 education contributing to the Global Goals



www.sdgaccord.org





Strategic Value for HEIs

How We View the Value

- Key that UON continues to define its strategic position globally, especially post-Covid-19:
 - **Changemaker:** currently redefining the strategic agenda to align Changemaker Challenges with SDGs & Levelling-up Goals.
 - **Sustainability Board:** this is exploring sustainability across UON including the SDGs.
 - **Sustainability Leadership Scorecard:** tool for educational organisations ([SLS](#))
 - **UNPRME:** United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education ([UNPRME](#))
- Crucially, it provides **global positioning** for UON's social values.

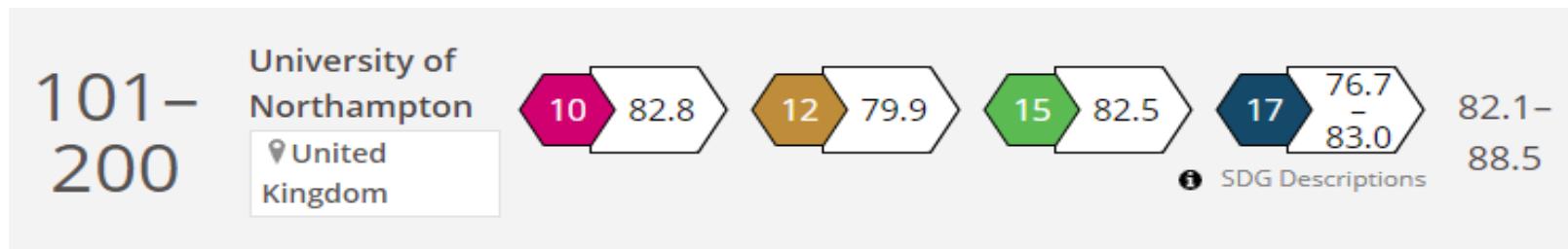


Times Higher Impact

- Times Higher Impact Rankings
 - Globally, we don't sit inside the **top 1,000 HEIs** on traditional rankings.
 - With the Impact Rankings we can.
- Universities are scored across their submitted SDGs, with the **three highest scoring SDGs** being used for the ranking score, alongside SDG17.
 - Scoring based on a mixture of academic metrics (i.e. publications) & other **impact related KPIs** within each SDG.
- UON's **first submission** for 2021, committed to ongoing **annual submissions**, just received results for 2022....



2022 Impact Rankings



- UON finished in the **Top 200 globally** (1,406 HEIs total), with several of our SDG submissions ranking inside the Top 100:
 - SDG10: Reducing Inequalities **we ranked 24th!**



Research

UON Research Strategy



- The SDGs form a **key part** of UON's 2025 Research Strategy:
 - “*We will seek to optimise the intellectual, scientific, economic, social & cultural impact of our research. We will work to ensure that our research has impact beyond academia by engaging with & influencing people & organisations to affect policy & practice. We will ensure that our **impact contributes to the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals***” (p.3)
- **Impact targets** within the strategy are to (p.11):
 - Develop **impact case studies** for next REF (follow up on the list of potential impact case studies identified in REF2021 preparation).
 - Develop **record of impact** for all research projects in PURE.
 - Prioritise projects (in terms of support) with **clearly defined impact**.
 - **Map existing & future research projects** to the UN SDGs.
- Research impact, **relatable to the SDGs** will therefore be a key feature for UON researchers moving forwards.

Research Impact

- REF2021 results just released. Key things for developing case-studies:
 - Collation of impact evidence **early-doors** as you go along.
 - Ensuring that you **publish** academic journal papers from impact projects.
 - Recording your impact in Pure & **aligning it** with the SDGs.
 - Ensuring a **clear narrative** between publications/impacts/projects.
- Key challenges in writing up an Impact Case-study:
 - Ensuring **clear links** between the impact & underpinning research.
 - Describing the impacts to maximise **reach & significance**, without over-claiming.

Four star	Outstanding impacts in terms of their reach & significance.
Three star	Very considerable impacts in terms of their reach & significance.
Two star	Considerable impacts in terms of their reach & significance.
One star	Recognised but modest impacts in terms of their reach & significance.
Unclassified	The impact is of little or no reach & significance; or the impact was not eligible; or the impact was not underpinned by excellent research produced by the submitted unit.

Impact Case-study

- For REF 2021 our research impact average grade was **3* (2.833)**
- Example case-study:
 - Working in coordination with the **Cabinet Office & HM Treasury**, the team provided:
 - analysis of the social investment market & its impact on Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations;
 - theoretical understanding of what constitutes social value;
 - frameworks for Social Impact Measurement, which have been piloted with third/public sector bodies
- Impact delivered included:
 - Contributed to HM Treasury's policies on **social investment tax relief**
 - Providing data for **EU State Aid** Negotiations
 - Co-Design of **Government Outcomes Lab** for the Commissioning Outcomes Support Partnership Programme



Teaching

Teaching SI

- Need for '**place-based**' learning in the teaching of social innovation (Elmes et al. 2019).
- Having curricula that can deliver place-based learning & the networks to enable this is critical (Alden-Rivers et al., 2015):
 - Students are enabled to achieve learning outcomes through **experiential work** in the community (*ibid*).
- Lecturers need the **requisite skills** to be able to effectively teach in this manner (Cederquist & Golüke, 2016).
- Enabling a **nexus** of theory, policy & practice (bringing academics down from **ivory towers**, whilst retaining theory & credibility).

SI in the Curriculum

- Curriculum embedding:
 - You don't need to throw the baby out with the bath water. There will often be **significant elements** of SI **already present** in curricula.
 - **Language** is critical here & needs to be flexible to appeal to different fields/faculties.
 - Assessments & the need to **move away** from traditional models (i.e. exams) - how do these impact the way that students approach problems?
 - At the University of Northampton, **every module** that we offer has a focus on social innovation built into it.



Graduate Employability

- Graduate employability is a **cornerstone** of UON's student journey:
 - Need to bolster student's **entrepreneurship, self-efficacy & leadership**
 - Prepare them for a highly **competitive graduate marketplace**
 - Embodies by our **Employment Promise & alumni follow-up**
 - If no graduate job **@ 12 months, guaranteed internship** with a partner organisation
 - **20% discount** on PG degree fees
- Two core offers: **Changemaker Gold & Employability+ Gold.**
 - Delivered through our Changemaker Hub
 - Changemaker Certificates: **Bronze, Silver & Gold:**
 - Ultimately, students are supported to **create their own SI/SE**
 - Employability+ Certificate: Self-development journey with **work placements/volunteering:**
 - These are provided with **local employers** including **large corporates**.
- Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) data shows:
 - UON has a **90.3% graduate employment rate @ 6 months** post-graduation.
- Our **Changemaker values** mean that we are committed to developing the **leaders of tomorrow!**



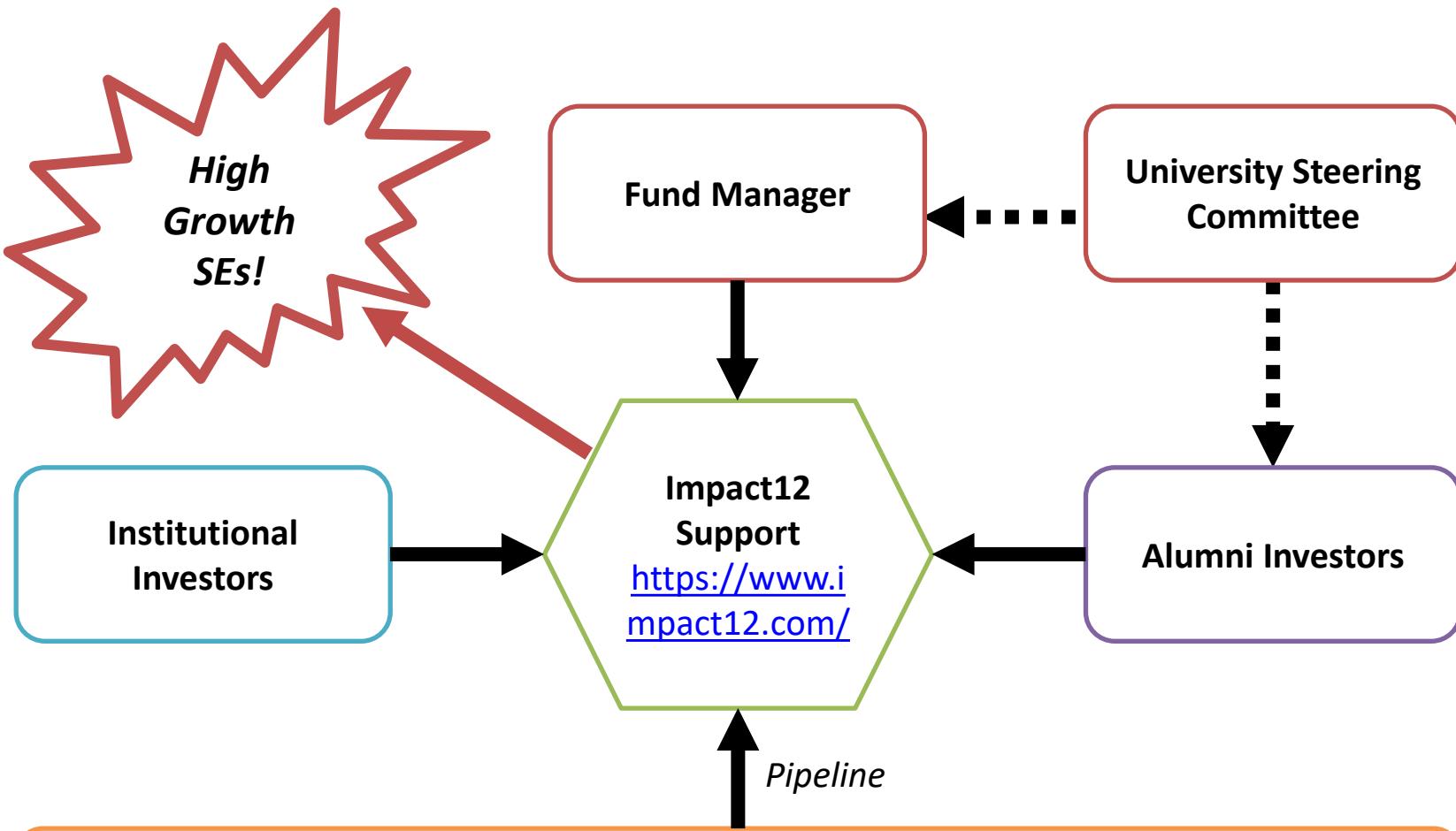
Community Engagement

Goodwill Solutions



- Logistics business ~**£4M** turnover, profitable.
- **Trains & employs** ex-offenders, homeless, drug addicts etc.
- In 2011 The University invested **£200k** for a **20% stake**.
 - Turnover at time **£500k**
- Opportunities:
 - Research case studies.
 - Student placements.
 - PR & financial return.
- **Create social impact!**

Incubation & Scale



Incubators & Ecosystems:

University of Oxford; University of Cambridge; University of Northampton; Anglia Ruskin University;
Warwick University; Coventry University; & University of Birmingham

International Partnerships



Social Innovation
Linkages for
Knowledge Exchange
Network

Strategic partners and collaborators





So in Summary...

Moving Forwards

- We are now working towards designing a **UON Social Impact Framework** that allows us to align the Changemaker Challenges, SDG Agenda & Levelling Up Goals.
- We need to ensure that we **capture relevant data** across UON systems:
 - University's [SDG Webpages](#)
 - Pure Repository – has new SDG relevant module launched in February 2021.
 - Sustainability Board.
 - Deans' Group.
- Need for **Faculty SDG Champions** to support this:
 - Associate Professor Scheme?
 - Nominated individuals?
 - Group remits?
- All reported into the **SDG Working Group**.

Summary

- Embedding social innovation **holistically** across universities is **tricky**
 - **Leadership support** is critical
 - Staff **buy-in** takes time
 - Needs to be part of a **wider sustainability** agenda
- Sustainability agenda is only going to become **more prominent**
 - **UN SDGs** run through until 2030 & a new framework beyond this will surely be developed
 - Critical that higher education engages with this to demonstrate value in 21st century as '**anchor institutions**'
- A focus on sustainability & social innovation has **strategic value** for HEIs
 - It is also **morally/ethically** the right thing to do
 - Benefits **students** & local/global **communities**
- International **ranking systems** are increasingly focusing on impact (i.e. Times Higher Impact)



Thank you
for listening

Any questions?

WE ARE NORTHAMPTON.AC.UK

Email: richard.hazenberg@northampton.ac.uk

Twitter: [@instituteSII](https://twitter.com/instituteSII)

LinkedIn: www.instituteforsocialinnovationandimpact.co.uk

Podcast: Talkin' Impact <https://twitter.com/talkinimpact>