SDG Accord Reporting 2021 CASE STUDY

Integration of SDGs in

☐ Institutional governance/strategic level
☐ SDGs in research
☐ SDGs in campus operations
☐ SDGs in curriculum development
☐ SDGs in student engagement activities
☐ SDGs into community activities
☐ SDGs at a whole-institution level

Focus on

☐ Goal 1 - No poverty
☐ Goal 2 - Zero hunger
☐ Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
☒ Goal 4 - Quality education
☐ Goal 5 - Gender equality
☐ Goal 6 - Clean water and sanitation
☐ Goal 7 - Affordable and clean energy
☐ Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth
☐ Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
☐ Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
☐ Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities
☐ Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production
☐ Goal 13 - Climate action
☐ Goal 14 - Life below water
☐ Goal 15 - Life on land
☐ Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
☐ Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

SDG Accord Reporting 2021 CASE STUDY

King's Civic Leadership Academy

King's Civic Leadership Academy (CLA) was designed to address the barriers that underrepresented students[1] are facing by giving them access to opportunities that will enhance their university experience, aid their personal development, and support them in their future careers. It aims to further empower students, who are already committed to creating positive change in society, by providing them with the knowledge, experience, skills, attributes and connections they need to become the civic leaders of the future.

Developed by King's in partnership with Citizens UK and local charities, the curriculum focuses on eight core competencies[2] and is delivered through a diverse series of activities. These include a full-week of initial readiness training, on-going half-day training sessions, action learning sets, a masterclass lecture series, a change-maker residential retreat, and sustained one-to-one mentorship.

CLA had great success in its pilot year, working with 18 community partners to provide internships for 50 students, of which 72% identified with two or more underrepresented characteristics. The students completed 11,270 hours of Service in the local community, which included leading roundtable discussions on supporting over 50s in the LGBTQ+ community and hosting a conference on mental health.

Currently in its second year, CLA continues to grow, now working in collaboration with over 30 community partners focused on some of the London's most complex social issues, including mental health, education, poverty, and homelessness. Students on the programme provide their time, unique perspectives and skills towards projects that have been designed by our community partners to further enhance the impact of their services. In return, our students build their network with the city's civic leaders, enhance their understanding of the challenges experienced within society and develop the skills, knowledge and attributes needed to take on leadership positions that will enable them to bring about the change they hope to see in the world.

1
Defined as students with a disability; from low-income households; from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds; who are estranger, care-experience, young-carers and/or forced migrants as well as Mature learners.
2 (1)Critical thinking; (2)Verbal & written communication; (3)Teamwork; (4)Leadership; (5)Professionalism; (6)Knowledge of diversity and social justice; (7)Self-efficacy towards service/civic participation; (8)Listening skills to build positive relationships.

SDG Accord Reporting 2021 CASE STUDY

BENEFITS

Working with What Works[1], the team is evaluating the project, its benefits to students and the wider community impact. What Works combines the highest academic standards with practical understanding of programme evaluation and has developed a Research Protocol to guide the evaluation. Main benefits include:

Benefits for students – The CLA has established an outcomes framework to measure and evidence how the intervention will deliver practical outcomes for students.

1. *Short Term Outcomes for students*: These are the immediate, incremental changes students achieve in relation to the CLA programme activities. We have designed the placements and curriculum around competencies that the evidence suggests will be effective 'staircases' to carry our students to our desired intermediate outcomes.

2. *Intermediate Outcomes for students*: These are the outcomes that we plan for students to achieve at the end of the 9-month CLA. By completing the CLA students will achieve: (1) Employability skills; (2) Civic attitude; (3) Belongingness to the King's and local community.

3. *Impacts*: These are the long-term impacts that we plan for students at the point of graduating from King's. King's graduates will be: (1) Highly employable, ambitious and entrepreneurial problem solvers; (2) Civically and socially minded world-citizens; (3) Confident, engaged and connected with the broader King's community.

Benefits for External Partners– External partners have been involved from the beginning of the project with co-design of core programmatic activities. The benefits for local charity partners include 300 hours of additional staff capacity per organisation to resource projects that would otherwise not go ahead. Moreover, in many cases our underrepresented students bring lived experience to the social issues the organisations work to address. Given the lack of diversity in the charity sector, CLA students give external partners the opportunity to diversify their workforce now, while also developing a pipeline of high-calibre graduates.

[1] *What Works is a specialist team that works on embedding behavioural insights and robust evaluation in widening participation.*

BARRIERS

1.   Challenges posed by the **COVID-19 pandemic**, has meant that much of the activity has had to be delivered online – this has impacted opportunities for students to develop deeper connections with one another throughout their time on the programme.

2.   **Impact Evaluation**; There are extraneous variables affecting a student's levels in the areas evaluated to measure impact. Self-reporting by participants presents a limitation of impact evaluation and this is an area that needs to be further explored.

3.   **Identify core competencies**; Through CLA, King's set out to develop students who are highly employable, civically minded and engaged citizens. Identifying specific key skills that underpin effective leadership and civic participation was thus a challenge.

SDG Accord Reporting 2021 CASE STUDY

Image of Student, Abigail Oyedele scholar on King's Civic Leadership Academy, who completed their placement at Writerz&Scribez an organisation that uses spoken word to support vulnerable communities to explore their creativity.

Image of the first cohort of King's Civic Leadership Academy Scholars. The programme involved 50 students, 70% of which came from an underrepresented background

CONCLUSIONS

Through conversations with our students, community partners and our own observations, we learned a lot about what works and what can be done to improve the programme. Building on our pilot, King's identified the following key elements as crucial for future development:

- Support students from the very beginning, this involves working with our Careers & Employability team to offer guidance that will support students in making strong applications to the programme.

- Provide more structured support to students and community partners, through regular check ins and implementing structures that will enable open communication, needed to ensure that all stakeholders have a mutually beneficial experience on the programme.

- Build on the success of the Leadership Development Curriculum. We know that students are looking for ways to make a difference in their community, working in partnership with Citizens UK a people-led organisation, we will train our students in the skills needed to become community organisers so that they can tackle social issues that are important to them.

- Embed evaluation techniques to measure the impact of the programme. Working with What Works we will look to see how we can collate further evaluation from our students and community partners, to better understand our impact.