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# **The Extent of Sustainability Practices in San Beda University: The Basis for Action Plan Formulation**

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## **Abstract**

Higher educational institutions play an important role in the realization of SDGs as an institution and as a member of a society. San Beda University launched the realignment of its programs and projects with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) starting the academic year 2019-2020. An Office was created to oversee the promotion and realization of the SDGs in the University's programs and projects. This study was conceptualized primarily to look into the extent of implementation, promotion and realization of SDGs in the University's programs and projects. The University is in infancy stage when it comes to the implementation of SDG. However, at this stage it has demonstrated practices that are aligned with SDGs particularly with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnership for Goals). But it has to overcome and improve on particularly in the areas of faculty research citation, formulation and implementation of policies and programs on Climate Action (SDG 13), documentation of pertinent information that will demonstrate commitment to reducing inequality (SDG 10), and the documentation of programs and activities that fall under other SDGs.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals, Higher Education

In 2015, the United Nations launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identified “comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centered set of universal and transformative Goals and targets” (UN 2015). It also recognized the need for eradicating poverty “in all forms and dimensions” as the “greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development” (UN 2015). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also expressed the commitment of the global community to “achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner” (UN 2015). It envisions a global society in 2030 that put an end to “poverty and hunger; to combat inequalities; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girl; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources” (UN 2015). Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development resolved to “create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all” (UN 2015).

The realization of the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development demands a “transformation of the financial, economic and political systems that govern societies to guarantee the human rights of all” (UN 2020). It also requires an “immense political will and ambitious action by all stakeholders” (UN 2020).

The Philippine government has implemented programs and projects for the promotion and realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda are operationalized into “work-life balance, a comfortable, secure and peaceful life” for every Filipino (NEDA 2019). For the year 2019, emphasis has been on the implementation of programs and projects aligned with SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnership for Goals). Sustainability and inclusivity are the goals and principles that guide the Philippine government’s development strategies for the country (NEDA 2019). Sustainability goals are implemented by adopting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach (NEDA 2019). This means that it is not the sole responsibility of the government to realize the sustainable goals but of all sectors in the society.

In the academic year 2019-2020, San Beda University launched the realignment of its programs and projects with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). An Office was created to oversee the promotion and realization of the SDGs in the University's programs and projects. At the end of academic 2019-2020, there is a strong need to review and document the implementation, promotion and realization of SDG in the University. This study was conceptualized primarily to look into the extent of implementation, promotion and realization of SDGs in the University's programs and projects.

### **Research Problem and Objectives**

This is the first study conducted on SDG practices at San Beda University. Hence, this study was conceptualized primarily to look into the extent of implementation, promotion and realization of SDGs in the University's programs and projects. The research question focused on the following: what is the extent of sustainability practices of San Beda University? More specifically, the authors aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the sustainability practices of San Beda University in realizing specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that fall within the following sustainable development dimensions: environmental, economic, social/cultural, and institutional/educational/political.
2. To identify the challenges experienced by the University in promoting and achieving the abovementioned SDGs.
3. To recommend the formulation of an action plan that will strengthen and sustain the role of the University in the promotion and achievement of SDGs.

### **Theoretical Background and Literature Review**

This study is anchored on the humanist and sustainable perspectives of development.

The 1970s saw a paradigm shift in the perspective of development. This shift was marked by the "dethronement of GNP" (Todaro, 1994: 15) which carried the slogan, "redistribution from growth". This means that development in this era focused more on the "reduction and elimination of poverty, inequality, and unemployment within the context of a growing economy" (Todaro, 1994: 16, Seers, 1974).

This perspective of development focused on the human person, not on GNP and industrialization, as the means and end of development. The challenge to development, from this perspective, is to “improve the quality of life.” Quality of life calls for higher income, better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom, and richer cultural life (Todaro, 1994: 16). In the words of Dudley Seers (1974: 6), the universal aim of development is “the realization of the potential of human personality.” The key questions to ask about development are:

What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result “development,” even if the per capita doubled (Seers, 1974: 6).

Pope Francis recently called for a notion of sustainable development that is based on the principle of common good. The principle of the common good “summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of” members of the society (Laudato Si, 158). Solidarity means that all human beings are interdependent. No one can exist without the other. In the context of the common good, humans should not only look after their personal needs and interests. It is also their moral responsibility to provide charity to others particularly to the least members of the society, the poor. Institutions as well as individuals are given authority and wealth to look after the welfare of other members of the society who are in need. Pope Francis also emphasized that it is not only the responsibility of the institutions and individuals to look after the welfare and needs of their generation but also of the generations to come. He called this as intergenerational solidarity (Laudato Si, 159). It means that the present generation should not only look after the common good of their generation but also of the next generations by preserving the natural environment. Pope Francis stressed that sustainable development cannot be separated from intergenerational sustainability (Laudato Si, 159). Intergenerational sustainability is not an option (Laudato Si, 159). It is the “basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us” (Laudato Si, 159).

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To achieve sustainable development, it recognizes the need to eradicate hunger and poverty in all its forms and dimensions and ensure that all “human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.” It is determined to “protect the planet from degradation” so that it can “support the needs of the present and future generations”. The Agenda for Sustainable Development ensures that “all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.” Seventeen sustainable goals have been identified to ensure that the vision of the 2030 Agenda will be realized. These are: end of poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace and justice strong institutions, and partnership to achieve goals.

### ***The Role of HEIs in SDGs***

Weiyu and Ka (2020) examined how the eight University Grant Committee (UGC) – funded public universities in Hong Kong responded to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by using collective efforts to assess the policies and selected practices adopted to achieve and promote the sustainable development advocated by UN.

The article argued that the promotion of UN SDGs should go beyond sustainability accounting and practices. Fundamental transformations in the university governance anchored on the integration of UN SDGs in its systems, process, policies, and programs are essential and critical in the promotion of SDGs. Such transformations should result in the creation of an ecosystem for achieving the SDGs beyond the narrow definition to a broad notion of sustainable development. This would involve addressing the negative consequences of massification, privatization, and internationalization of higher education. Developing resilience and risk management are becoming increasingly important toward enhancing sustainability in university governance.

The same article (Weiyu and Ka, 2020 ) also presented that the success of the achievement and promotion of UN SDGs by the eight Hong Kong Universities can be attributed to the establishment of the Hong Kong Sustainable Campus Consortium (HKSCC) which serves as a sharing

platform and advisory organization to the eight participating universities to promote sustainability practices in their campuses, including research, teaching, and knowledge transfers. The HKSCC developed exemplary sustainability practices that led to the successful achievement and promotion of SDGs. These are the collective power through group working of eight universities, excellent performance of self-guaranteed sub-committee, and the good relationship with the government maintained by regular and effective reporting activities. The HKSCC also experienced challenges in the process of promoting the SDGs. These challenges are the need for re-affirmation of the value of sustainability in higher education institutions, the dilemma of the management, the lack of involvement of academics, and the lack of external validation. Despite these challenges, the HKSCC still did well in integrating eight universities into higher education sector to negotiate with business and the social sector to meet sustainability goals. The self-generated and voluntary sub-committees or working groups, guided by the “bottom-up” perspective, also played a significant role in the sustainability practices across eight universities. However, the HKSCC merely focuses on the environmental side of sustainability practices and is less engaged in the social impact side.

The authors of the article recommended that university leaders pay particular systematic attention and priority placement in their institutional plans, organizations, and budgets. Furthermore, they recommended the changing of the ecosystem and ecologies of universities as the key toward successful higher education sustainability.

Flinder, et. al. (2019) reviewed the existing literature to provide an integrative conceptualization of the impacts of higher education institutions (HEIs) on sustainability development goals (SDGs). The article defined impacts as the HEI's effects on its stakeholders, the natural environment, the economy and society. Impacts, as it was further explained, are to be understood as the effects that an HEI has outside of its organizational or academic boundaries – namely, its stakeholders, the natural environment, the economy and society. This includes the impacts of the HEI as an organization caused by activities in the core elements: education, research, campus operations, outreach, campus experiences, institutional framework and assessment and reporting. The authors clarified that outreach activities (e.g., community teaching) are not regarded as impacts because they take place within the sphere and under the direct control of the HEI and should not be confused with their potential effects (e.g., contribution to school and career achievements).

The main question of the Flinder et al. (2019) article was, “what themes are addressed within the literature of the impacts of HEIs on SD?” Along this line, the article identified the following themes as: outreach activities, assessment and reporting, non-academic impacts, impacts of education on SD, campus operations, campus experiences and societal challenges, and the last is generalist.

In the first theme, *outreach activities*, the main emphasis of the studies is on school collaborations and the support of small business and the local community. In the second theme, *assessment and reporting*, studies applied a variety of different approaches, such as simulations and input-output models to examine socio-economic impacts of HEIs. In the *non-academic impacts of research*, the third theme, articles addressed impacts on policy, research uptake in business practice, societal impacts and the impacts of co-creation research. In *impacts of education on SD*, articles focused on sustainable lifestyles, economic impacts, and distance learning and impacts on culture. The theme category of *campus operations* focused on the impacts of campus operations on the natural environment. In *campus experiences* and *societal challenges*, studies focused on alcohol policy, staff training and community involvement, and green campus. The group of studies under the last theme, *generalist*, cannot be classified in any of the themes identified above.

The literature's definition of a sustainable university always refers to environmental, economic, and social concerns that universities should have on their activities, as well as the obligation of "leading by example": a university should "minimize the negative environmental, economic, societal, and health effects generated in the use of their resources" (Velazquez et al., 2006) ; a university must protect both human and ecosystem health and well-being, and apply knowledge gained to address today's and tomorrow's ecological and social challenges (Cole, 2003); efforts for energy resource conservation, waste reduction, and the promotion of social justice and equity must be transferred to society (Alshuwaikhat and Abubakar, 2008). Notable is Cortese's (2003) definition, which confirms Findler's 2019 study that the impacts of a higher education institution on sustainable development are based on the following themes or dimensions: education, research, campus operations, and community outreach. Lozano (2003) added a fifth dimension, claiming that the first four must be assessed and reported on.



Tilbury (2019) argued that the success of achieving and promoting SDGs in HEIs requires a rethink of the national (and international) higher education frameworks and processes for quality assurance and enhancement. It is important to seek different pathways to embed SDGs in educational quality codes and frameworks. That is why there is a need to work with qualified professionals such as quality assessors, quality agencies, accrediting bodies and curriculum reviewers.

Tilbury (2019) emphasized quality assurance and enhancement as a pathway to integrate SDGs in HEIs because for him, HEIs can best address the SDGs if they revise the “how” or pedagogical and assessment approaches as well as the “what” or content and learning outcomes. He further explained that HEIs must model SDGs in their management, practice and relationships with the community so that students will have a lived experienced of SDGs.

Gual (2019) had a similar argument with Tilbury by giving emphasis on teaching and learning as an essential strategy to a successful achievement and promotion of SDGs in HEIs. Gual explained that what HEIs really need to do is to change what is being taught and also how it is learned. HEIs have to question the goals and methods of their teaching, research, and assessment results, not based on the number of students and papers published but rather on real impact on improving the lives of people and the planet.

That is why for Gual (2019), the first thing that needs to be done is to change the outlook of knowledge, and to be aware of the consequences that arise from what people do. Secondly, teachers and students need to understand and address the SDGs by generating new knowledge, skills and motivations to achieve a true education for sustainable development. There is a need to focus on academic and vocational knowledge on SDGs, with much more holistic training in values. Thirdly, HEIs need to cooperate with one another, with development and non-government organizations, and with other sectors of the society to find resources, technologies and spaces for social, technological and economic innovation, to improve living conditions in towns and communities that suffer from inequality and risk.

Jorgensen (2019) also had similar observation with Tilbury (2019) and Gual (2019). SDGs, according to Jorgensen, gave a sense of relevance and purpose to HEIs by directly linking research to the large community

beyond the academia and by giving a sense of purpose and belonging to a greater mission. Jorgensen explained that the achievement of SDGs is also linked to the need for investments in education, research, and innovation. The SDGs are interconnected. Hence, achieving them requires integrated implementation of programs and activities.

### ***Dimensions of Sustainable Development in HEIs***

Alexio et al. (2018) pointed out a number of relevant studies on the engagement of HEIs in implementing sustainability practices. The authors provided examples of sustainability practices in various dimensions (e.g., environmental, economic, social, and institutional) that have been integrated into HEI core activities (e.g., education, research, operation, commitment engagement, and governance/culture)

Three pillars of SD dimensions have been identified: economic, social, and environmental (Albareda-Tiana et al., 2017; Amaral et al., 2015; Sammalisto et al., 2015). However, other SD pillars, particularly, institutional and cultural, are becoming more common (Lozano, 2008; Disterheft et al., 2013; Leal Filho et al., 2015). Meanwhile, other authors point to four SD dimensions proposed for sustainability practices and sustainable development practices and implementation in higher educational institutions: environmental, economic, social/cultural, and institutional/educational/political (Lozano, 2011; Alonso-Almeida et al., 2015; Larrán Jorge et al., 2015; Aleixo et al., 2016).

SD's *economic dimension* entails economic viability and addressing economic needs (e.g., concern about economic performance, plans to improve energy efficiency and budget for practices promoting SD). SD's *environmental dimension* proposes incorporating environmental concerns into the organization's strategy (e.g., construction of sustainable buildings on campus, separation of waste and its forwarding for recycling, and equipment to generate renewable energy). SD's *social and cultural dimension* refers to actions taken by either an organization's human resources or the surrounding community (e.g., policies promoting equality and diversity, developing and participating in recreational, cultural or sports activities, concerns and initiatives for social inclusion, and cultural or scientific initiatives targeting the outside community). The *institutional, educational, and political dimensions* of SD refer to how institutions shape their behavior and values, as well as how various stakeholders perceive the SD approach and objectives (e.g., SD included in the HEI mission, vision and values; concern with ethical issues; and HEI

has curricular units on SD). Table 1 below summarizes the main sustainability practices in HEIs along the dimensions mentioned above:

**Table 1.**

*Dimensions and Sustainability Practices in HEIs*

DIMENSIONS	PRACTICES
Environmental	Declarations and actions related to HEIs involvement in environmental issues and resource scarcity (environment and management of natural resources; prevention of pollution; protection of environment and biodiversity; restoration of natural habitats; ecological footprint; non-renewable resources; depletion of materials; degradation).
Economic	Declarations and actions related to the direct economic impact and financial sustainability of HEIs (financial situation; results; efficiency, poverty reduction and market economy).
Social/Cultural	Declarations and explanation of policies and procedures concerning human rights (labor practices and decent work; human rights; quality of life; occupational health and safety; the equity dimension; training of employees; involvement in social issues and action within HEI community
Institutional/Educational /Political	Declarations and explanations on the HEI views, values, strategy, transparency in governance and ethical commitments. Also declarations and partnerships on national and international criteria for promoting sustainable development. Practices in education, research, university operations (e.g. certifications), community outreach and assessment and reporting were also considered.

*Note:* Adapted from Aleixio et al.2016

In summary, the various literature discussed above had illustrated that the success of the implementation of SDGs in higher educational institutions is a function of university governance by integrating the SDGs on their systems, processes, policies, and programs. Furthermore, the said literature emphasized that the implementation and integration of SDGs in the higher educational institutions' core elements – education, research, campus operation, outreach, campus experience, institutional framework, assessment, and reporting – must have impacts outside the organizational/academic boundaries.

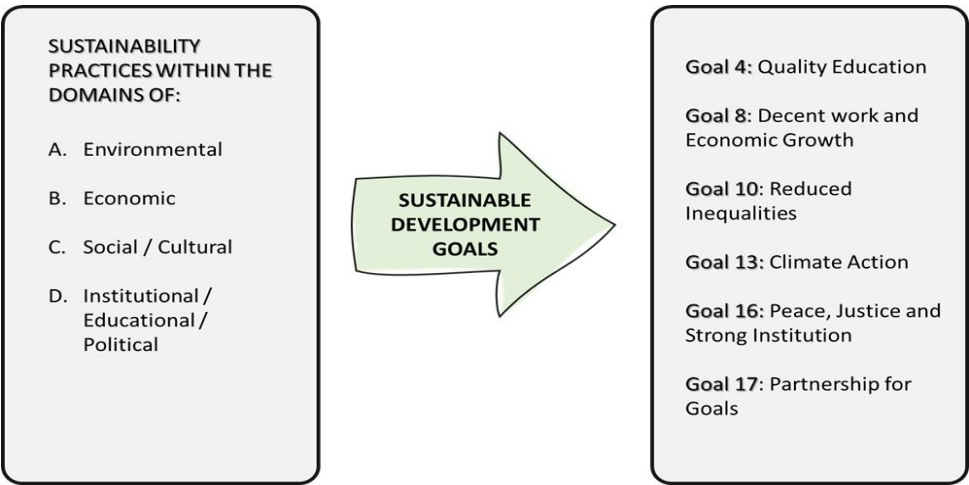
On the other hand, other literature suggests that the success of SDG implementation in higher educational institutions can be realized by rethinking the national and international higher education frameworks and processes for quality assurance. There is a need to rethink the frameworks on teaching and learning as well as on the relevance and purpose of higher educational institutions' research programs to the larger community beyond the boundaries of the academic institutions.

**Operational Framework**

The theoretical background and literature review led the authors of this study to craft an operational framework (cf. Figure 1) by which the research objectives can be answered. First, the authors investigated the extent of sustainability practices of the San Beda University that are aligned with SDG #4 (Quality Education) ; SDG #8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth); #10 (Reduced Inequalities); #16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and #17 (Partnership for Goals). Then, these sustainability practices were examined in relation to the dimensions for sustainable development. Correspondingly, the authors identified the challenges encountered and recommended an action plan in relation to education, research, campus operations, community outreach and assessment and reporting for possible consideration by the University administration as well as units and offices concerned.

**Figure 1.**

*Operational Framework*



Methodology

This study used a qualitative exploratory research design and utilized the survey, interview and document analysis as research methods. The researchers gathered data on how SDGs were integrated, implemented and realized. The data gathered were based on the organizational classification of the University, specifically, academic units, non-academic units, and organizations, which were analyzed on how SDGs were integrated, implemented and realized in the core elements of the University. Interviews and documents were used as a means of gathering data and information from each unit, office, or organization.

Respondents were determined based on the organizational classification of the University, as shown in Table 2 below. The table also indicates the respondents interviewed and the type of documents analyzed as a source of information. The heads of each unit or organization were interviewed, thus making a total of twenty (20) respondents.

Table 2.

*Organizational Classification, Number of Respondents and Documents Analyzed*

Organizational Classification	Number of Respondents	Type of Document/s Analyzed
1. ACADEMIC UNITS		
College of Arts and Sciences	1 for each academic unit, in particular the Heads of the Academic Units  <i>Total of 8 respondents</i>	Faculty Manual
College of Medicine		Student Handbook
College of Law		Memoranda
College of Nursing		Annual Reports
Basic Education Department		MOAs
Graduate School of Business		
Graduate School of Law		
Graduate School of Liturgy		

**Table 2.***Continued*

<b>Organizational Classification</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Type of Document/s Analyzed</b>
<b>2. NON-ADACEMIC UNITS</b>		
Human Resource Office		
Accounting Office		
Placement Office		
Community Engagement Center	1 for each academic	Employees
Instructional Media Center	unit, in particular the	Manual
Library	Heads of the Non-	Annual Reports
Governance and Quality Assurance	Academic Units	Memoranda
Office		MOAs
Office of Linkages and International	<i>Total of 10</i>	
Affairs	<i>respondents</i>	
Office for Research and Innovation		
Office of Vice President for		
Administration		
<b>3. ORGANIZATIONS</b>	President of each	
SBU Employees Association	organization	Annual Reports
SBU Union	<i>Total of 2</i>	
	<i>respondents</i>	

The survey instrument was adapted from “THE Impact Rankings Methodology 2021 Version 2.0” to verify the presence of specific indicators for the identified SDGs. The instrument, in google form, was sent through email during the early part of December 2020 until the early part of February 2021. The survey questionnaire focused on the programs implemented by the offices and no personal information were involved. After the survey, interviews were conducted with the heads of the different units, offices and organization to verify, deepen and discuss their responses. Interviews were held either through phone call or face-to-face. The authors ensured that personal information gathered was treated with utmost care and confidentiality.

### ***Research Limitation***

This study is limited to qualitative research through survey, interview, and document analysis. It focused only on selected academic and non-academic units in the San Beda University due to the restrictions brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. During the conduct of this study, there were times when the University shifted to work from home due to the declarations of Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) or Modified

Enhance Community Quarantine (MECQ). It made the gathering of data very challenging. Hence, the researchers decided to conduct the interviews of selected offices concerned through email, face to face, or phone call, and requested the said offices to submit documents for evaluation and analysis.

## Results and Discussion

This section is organized based on the results from the implementation of sustainability practices of the University in the attainment of the six identified SDGs such as #4 (Quality Education), #8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), #10 (Reduced Inequalities), #13 (Climate Action), #16 (Peace Justice and Strong Institution), and #17 (Partnership Goals). Further, initiatives, projects, activities and program of the University were listed according to the four dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic, social/cultural, and institutional/educational/political).

### *On SDG #4: Quality Education*

Education is one of the best means, if not the only means, to get out of poverty. Access to quality education equip individuals with the knowledge and skills required in order to be productive and to contribute to providing solutions to the problems of the society. It is also essential in improving people's quality of life.

**Table 3.**

*Sustainability Practices Related to SDG #4: Quality Education*

PRACTICES IN RELATION TO DIMENSION	INITIATIVES/PROJECTS/ ACTIVITIES/PROGRAM
Environmental <i>Participation and involvement in environmental issues</i>	Health, Environment Advocacy Seminars and Research Endeavors
Economic <i>Annual and semestral activities on education and lifelong learning that are open to public</i>	Seminars on Livelihood, (Marketing and Packaging, Business Efficiency)  Business and economic research endeavors
Social/Cultural <i>Development and participation in individual's holistic development</i>	Mobile Obstetrics Monitoring for Moms  Literacy and Spirituality Seminar
Institutional/ Educational/Political <i>Public access to the University Library's vast collection of learning resources</i>	Street Law Series and Free Legal Consultation

Table 3 reveals that San Beda University contributes to quality education in the Philippine society by allowing public access to the University Library's vast collection of learning resources. Policies and guidelines are being implemented to ensure that these resources are accessible not only to members of the University but also to the public in need of knowledge and information. Through its Community Engagement Center (CEC), the University implements annual and semestral activities on education or lifelong learning that are open to the public. These activities are (1) street law series and free consultation; (2) seminar on livelihood, i.e., marketing and packaging, business efficiency; (3) mobile obstetrics monitoring for moms; and health, environment advocacy, literacy and spirituality seminar. The street law series and a free consultation is an activity implemented by the CEC in coordination with the Legal Aide Bureau of the University's College of Law that provides free legal services to the public and to the University's partner communities. The livelihood seminar is also carried out with partner communities by the CEC and College of Arts and Sciences Business Cluster. While activity on mobile obstetrics for moms is implemented in partnership with the Municipality of Bauko in Mountain Province by the CEC and College of Medicine. Lastly, the seminars on health, environment, literacy and spirituality are implemented by the CEC in coordination with the College of Arts and Sciences Liberal Arts and Sciences Cluster. All of these activities are beneficial to the public. But the street law series and free legal consultation is the most lauded program since it offers free legal services which are expensive in the country.

### ***On SDG #8: Decent Work & Economic Growth***

"Decent work in safe and stable conditions is a vital component of helping people out of poverty, with the related aspects of reducing hunger and increasing health" (THE, 2021). San Beda University as an employer has demonstrated commitment to good employment practices as evidenced by financial, medical, and educational benefits received by regular employees. These are sick, vacation and emergency leave benefits, longevity pay, education subsidy, medicine allowance, clothing subsidy and clothing loan, laundry allowance, transportation allowance, rice, subsidy, marriage, birth and burial benefits, meal discount, health care benefits, resignation benefits, retirement benefits, medical and dental services, performance bonus and Christmas cash gift. These benefits are on top of the statutory benefits: 13<sup>th</sup> -month pay, parental leave (RA 8972), special leave for women (RA 9710), violence against women and children leave (RA 8187), and paternity leave (RA 8187).



**Table 4.***Sustainability Practices Related to SDG #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*

<b>PRACTICES IN RELATION TO DIMENSION</b>	<b>INITIATIVES/PROJECTS/ ACTIVITIES/PROGRAM</b>
Environmental	n/a
Economic <i>Pronouncements and actions related to financial sustainability of the University</i>	Initiated financial, medical, and educational benefits received by regular employees on top of the statutory benefits
Social/Cultural <i>Pronouncement and implementation of policies and procedures concerning labor rights, quality of life and work health and safety</i>	
Institutional/ Educational/Political <i>Announcement and statements on University's views, values, and legal commitments</i>	

Table 4 shows that the University has written policies on tenure, promotion, workdays, work hours, meal and rest periods, Saturday afternoon off, school holiday, suspension of work, salaries and wages, overtime work, night differential pay. The duties and responsibilities of academic and academic support personnel as well as the employees' code of discipline and process of conduct of investigation are also written in the manuals. The University has also clear guidelines on the implementation of anti-sexual harassment act. This is to protect all members of the University from possible sexual abuses and advances.

**Table 5.***Sustainability Practices Related to SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities*

<b>PRACTICES IN RELATION TO DIMENSION</b>	<b>INITIATIVES/PROJECTS/ ACTIVITIES/PROGRAM</b>
Environmental	n/a
Economic <i>Participation and active involvement related to the stakeholders/partners of the University for their economic and financial sustainability</i>	Livelihood seminars and conduct action researches to help uplift the lives of the poorest poor
Social/Cultural <i>Human rights declarations and explanations of policies and procedures (labor practices, quality of life, health and safety)</i>	Free medical consultation through the mobile obstetrics monitoring for moms Initiated employment benefits, opportunities and protection to all regardless of gender and background
Institutional/ Educational/ Political <i>Human rights declarations and explanations of policies and procedures (legal rights)</i>	Conduct of free legal consultation to the poorest members of the society through the Street Law Series

***On SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities***

Inequalities can be in a form of gender, economic, health, political and social. Table 5 reveals that San Beda University has activities and policies that contribute to the reduction of inequalities in the society. These are the conduct free legal consultation to the poorest members of the society through the street law series and free consultation program as well as the free medical consultation through the mobile obstetrics monitoring for moms. The different livelihood seminars are also intended to help uplift the lives of the poorest of the poor and thereby reducing inequalities. The University also contributed to the reduction of inequality through its employment benefits and practices that provide various benefits to its employees, provide equal employment opportunity to all regardless of gender and background as well as protect its employees from possible sexual abuses.

**Table 6.***Sustainability Practices Related to SDG #13: Climate Action*

PRACTICES IN RELATION TO DIMENSION	INITIATIVES/PROJECTS/ ACTIVITIES/PROGRAM
Environmental <i>Active participation and involvement in health and environmental issues and adherence and compliance on government rules and guidelines for environmental care and protection</i>	Water safety and survival training to its partner communities through the CEC  Seminar on community-based disaster risk reduction and management towards safe and resilient communities  Research publications and presentations related to environmental issues

***On SDG #13: Climate Action***

Climate action refers to the actions implemented in order to “reduce the impact of climate change, especially amongst the poorest who will be the most affected.” Table 6 shows that the University regularly conducted water safety and survival training for its partner communities through the CEC. It also provides seminar on community-based disaster risk reduction and management towards safe and resilient communities.

**Table 7.***Sustainability Practices Related to SDG #16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*

PRACTICES IN RELATION TO DIMENSION	INITIATIVES/PROJECTS/ ACTIVITIES/PROGRAM
Institutional/ Educational/ Political  <i>Enhanced networking and linkages effort for best practices in law education as well as other professional practices for the promotion of peace and justice</i>  <i>Transparency in governance, ethics and values, programs and policies</i>	Training and formation of law students to eventually practice their profession to and become promoters of peace and justice  Formal partnership with government and private sectors for the promotion of peace and justice  Formation of BOT whose members comprise of Benedictine monks, alumni, school administrators and industry practitioners  Pro-active student governments

***On SDG #16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions***

Universities are expected to support strong institutions in their respective countries and promote peace and justice (THE, 2021). San Beda University has demonstrated this by producing graduates in the discipline of law. Table 7 shows that for the last three academic years (2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-2020), the University has produced 543 graduates in doctor juris and 94 in master/doctor of laws. This is 22% of the total number of graduates for the last three academic years. The University is one of the producers of lawyers in the country as well as public officials who are serving in all branches of the government as well as in both local and national government.

As an institution, the University has governance measures with the presence of a Board of Trustees (BOT) composed of Benedictine monks, alumni, and some alumni who are administrators and faculty of the university. The University also has student government bodies that represent the interests of the students to the administration. Policies and procedures on the engagement of other stakeholders with the University are in place to ensure that programs of the University are aligned with the needs and demands of the society. The collaboration of the University through its faculty and administrators with the government particularly in the area of law is also in place. This collaboration resulted in meaningful activities that are beneficial to the community. These are the blood donation program in partnership with Philippine Blood Center and the legal and paralegal services in partnership with Barangay San Antonio, Quezon City, Manila Social Welfare and Development, Sinag sa Sais Community Center.

***On SDG #17: Partnership for Goals***

Partnership for goals refers to Universities support for “SDGs through collaboration with other countries, the promotion of best practices and the publication of data and evidence” (THE, 2021).

**Table 8.***Sustainability Practices Related to SDG #17: Partnership for Goals*

<b>PRACTICES IN RELATION TO DIMENSION</b>	<b>INITIATIVES/PROJECTS/ ACTIVITIES/PROGRAM</b>
Social/Cultural <i>Pronouncements and actions related to poverty reduction, health and safety measures, and other social issues</i>	Seminars and trainings on volunteerism, basic survival, food security, nutrition and livelihood
Institutional/ Educational/ Political <i>Formal partnerships, networking, collaborations and linkages to promote sustainable development and sharing of best practices in knowledge creation, research, assessment and certifications</i>	Research and seminar-fora in collaboration with partner schools abroad (ex. RENPER)  Organizing transformational leadership training-seminar with foreign participants like SEED  Membership in professional organizations  Accreditation and certification for quality management and assurance

Table 8 indicates the sustainable practices of the University in the attainment of SDG#17. San Beda University's Office for Linkages and International Affairs (LIA) is responsible for storing the research works in partnership with foreign institutions. In cooperation with its international partner institutions, the University's LIA also organizes the Asean Learning Network (ALN) Social Enterprise for Economic Development (SEED) and Regional Network on Poverty Eradiation (RENPER). The former is a "cross-cultural Transformational Leadership Program" organized by the University in collaboration with ALN. It immerses foreign and local faculty and students in depressed communities to conduct research on how to help improve the lives of the people in the said communities. The latter, on the other hand, "creates opportunities for high impact international fora on poverty eradication." The University in cooperation with the members of RENPER in South and South East Asia organizes fora that will lead to the understanding of the plight of the poor, causes of poverty as well as solutions that will result in poverty alleviation.

The University's CEC also implements programs and activities on teaching the next generation to adopt sustainability in their lives. These

are the seminars and trainings on volunteerism, basic survival, food security, nutrition, and livelihood.

### **Challenges and Recommendations**

The University is in its infancy stage of integrating SDGs in its academic and non-academic programs as well as activities. The establishment of an SDG Office will further strengthen and solidify San Beda's contribution to the achievement of SDGs in the society that it serves and within the institution. There are some challenges that the University has to address. One of the challenges for the University is the documentation of cited research works in the areas of quality education and lifelong learning, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, and climate action. Another challenge is the documentation of first-generation students, student employment placement, student and employee with disabilities. The crafting and implementation of policies and programs on climate action also need to be improved including the and documentation of research and activities in other SDGs.

For the University to further strengthen and sustain its implementation of SDGs, these SDGs must be integrated in the University's strategic objectives. Indicators must be formulated and identify that will guide offices concerned on the implementation of SDGs. Offices and units within the University must conduct activities annually or semestral that are aligned with the SDGs. Offices and units must submit their annual activity plan pertaining to SDGs. The University must also evaluate the performance of offices and units based on the SDG objectives and indicators.

### **Plan of Action**

The challenges identified can be further overcome by the University by formulating plan of action on the following:

1. The University must further strengthen its research program aligned with the SDGs.
2. The University must review academic and non-academic activities in the light of the SDGs.
3. The University must produce research articles aligned with any of the SDG published in journals indexed using Elsevier's ASJC classification and the proportion of published articles must appear in the Top 10% of journals according to the Citescore metric.

4. The University must formulate and implement innovative policies and programs on Climate Change (SDG 13) and document pertinent information that will demonstrate commitment to reducing inequality (SDG 10).
5. The University must formulate a system that will document all programs and activities that fall under any of the SDGs.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, San Beda University has practices that are aligned with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnership for Goals). In SDG 4, the University has contributed to quality education by providing public access to its vast collection of learning resources as well as implementing on lifelong learning that is open to the public. In SDG 8, the University has demonstrated commitment to good employment policies and practices and providing financial, medical, and educational benefits to regular employees. In SDG 10, the University has implemented activities and policies that contribute to the reduction of inequalities in the society such as through employment benefits and practices to employees and free legal and medical services to the poorest of the poor. In SDG 13 (Climate Action), the University conducts water safety, survival training, and community-based disaster risk reduction and management for communities. In SDG 16, the University also showed support to peace, justice, and strong institutions by producing graduates in the discipline of law, maintaining strong governance in the Board of Trustees (BOT), student government bodies, and stakeholder engagements. Lastly, in SDG 16, the University's Office for Linkages and International Affairs (LIA) maintains research works in partnership with foreign institutions and through the University's Community Engagement Center (CEC)'s training programs.

Some challenges identified in the implementation of the SDG may be overcome through a Plan of Action suggested in this study.

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