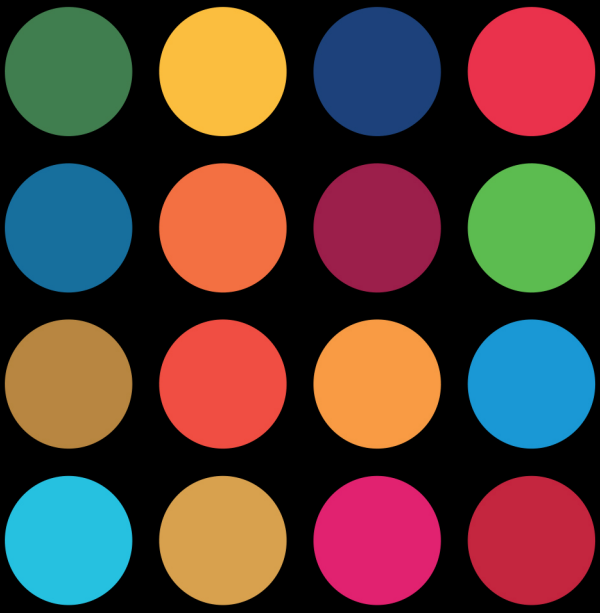
HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

WENDY PURCELL
SERIES EDITOR

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SDG3

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



EDITED BY
WENDY PURCELL

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SDG3

Higher education is vital for co-creating both the workforce and evidence base that underpins delivery of good health and well-being. UCL's Global Business School for Health shows how innovation by a university can accelerate its reach and impact in support of SDG3.

— *David Probert, MBA*, Chief Executive, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, UK

This book highlights the critical activities of universities and colleges to meet SDG3 targets. From setting up new schools of study, to meeting national needs for healthcare workers, undertaking health research and its translation to eradicate disease and promote healthful lives. It also includes cases on how AI is being harnessed to advance good health and well-being.

— *Ángel Cabrera*, President of Georgia Institute of Technology, USA

Higher education is an essential partner on the journey towards good health and well-being. This book offers a range of examples that illustrate the transformative power of universities and colleges working to deliver SDG3. The case studies can be adapted and amplified globally so we can journey faster towards health for all.

— *Yi-Hua Chen, PhD*, Dean, College of Public Health, Taipei Medical University, Taiwan

Adopting health and well-being to explore how higher education is advancing the sustainable development agenda brings a range of global exemplars to the fore. One of these is the JPB Fellowship program that supports junior faculty across the US to tackle inequity through environmental health research and its application in practice and policy. There is a lot to learn from this work that could be amplified by other higher education systems across the world so that no one gets left behind.

— *Kari Nadeau, MD, PhD*, Dean, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, USA

Public health cannot fulfill its mission if entire populations remain invisible. The commitment to leave no one behind demands that LGBTQ+ people and others marginalized by our health systems be intentionally included in education, research, and practice. That is why we modernized and humanized our Master of Public Health program, as described in this book, and created the world's first MPH program in LGBTQ+ health. SDG3 belongs to everyone, and that means LGBTQ+ health must be recognized as an essential part of achieving health and well-being for all.

— *Perry N. Halkitis, PhD, MS, MPH*, Dean, Hunterdon Professor of Public Health & Health Equity, Distinguished Professor of Biostatistics & Epidemiology

Universities and colleges support health and well-being for all through their education, research, and community efforts. This book offers global examples of innovative practice across these domains that, if amplified by the sector, can accelerate progress towards delivering SDG3.

— *Yonette F. Thomas, PhD*, Founder and Chief Executive, UrbanHealth360, USA

The connections between planetary health, sustainability and well-being are increasingly clear. This book provides practical examples and insights that can support education organisations in embedding sustainability, advancing the SDGs, and enhancing their impact across learners, communities and the wider environment.

— *Charlotte Bonner, MSc, FRSA*, Chief Executive, Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Series Editor

Wendy Purcell, PhD, FRSA
Professor with Rutgers University and Academic Research Scholar with Harvard University; Emeritus Professor and University President Emerita

About the Series

Higher Education and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a series of 17 books that address each of the SDGs in turn specifically through the lens of higher education. Adopting a solution-based approach, each book focuses on how higher education is advancing delivery of sustainable development and the United Nations' global goals.

Forthcoming Volume

Higher Education and SDG9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; edited by Carla Liuzzo

Higher Education and the Sustainable Development Goals

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SDG3

Good Health and Well-being

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Dedicated to the late Dr Roger Worthington
(d. 16 October 2024), who was to co-edit this volume with me.
Roger initiated outreach and early discussions with several of the contributing authors. We hope this work reflects the vision he helped co-create. We remain deeply grateful for his life and the privilege of having known him.

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SERIES PREFACE

Wendy Purcell, PhD, FRSA, Series Editor

Higher education (HE) materially contributes to delivering the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs). Teaching and learning support the development of responsible citizens as scholars, leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals. Curiosity-driven and socially impactful research and innovation help advance knowledge frontiers to address the world's most pressing issues. As anchor institutions, universities and colleges are also active in civic and community settings, working in partnership with other stakeholders. Given the fierce urgency of (un)sustainable development, the climate crisis, and widening inequity within and between countries, HE institutions (HEIs) need to do more and go faster to deliver fully on their potential to help achieve the SDGs.

This book series addresses the role of HE in advancing the SDGs, identifying actionable and scalable initiatives, and pointing to opportunities ahead. It seeks to both inspire and enable those in HEIs and stakeholders beyond to transform what they do and how they do it to progress Agenda 2030. Insights gleaned from case studies, descriptive accounts, and student stories can help HEIs deepen and accelerate engagement with the SDGs. Each book seeks to capture examples of how HEIs are fulfilling delivery of their academic mission and progressing the SDG concerned. Illustrating the work of students, faculty, and staff of the institution, and that undertaken with others, positions HEIs as change agents operating at a systems level in contributing to sustainable development.

This volume focuses on HE and SDG3 'Good Health and Well-being'. The good news is that many people are living longer, healthier lives, and some SDG3 targets have already been met. However, this belies the scourge of growing health inequities, the rising costs of healthcare leaving many without cover or pushed into poverty, and the systemic failures to invest in preventative and

public health measures. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed stark global and societal divides in health and well-being and impeded progress on SDG3 targets. Today, in some developed nations, the longevity of the current generation is less than that of their parents, while developing countries are witnessing the rise of communicable diseases and loss of health gains.

Through their core missions of education, research, community engagement, and civic leadership, the contribution of HEIs to SDG3 is wide-ranging and transformative. Curated cases and examples from across the globe are explored in this book to illustrate how progress towards SDG3 is being made through the academic activities of HEIs as well as their work in partnership with other organisations and groups. As institutions that have stood for many centuries in some cases, HEIs' purposeful engagement with the SDGs can catalyse pedagogic and curriculum innovation, stimulate programme development, open new avenues for research, and energise people to deliver on the global goals. Achieving SDG3 is vital to enabling the health and well-being of people, the planet, and shared prosperity. This book illustrates how HEIs can bring their key assets of curiosity and the pursuit of knowledge and its application to advance sustainability for today and adopt sustainable development as an organising principle to help create a world that leaves no one behind.

HE AND SDG3: INTRODUCTION

Wendy Purcell

Rutgers University, USA

Higher education (HE) plays a critical role in delivering the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; UN, n.d.-a) through teaching and learning, research and innovation, and civic and community engagement, with huge opportunities to accelerate its contribution (IAU, 2023). This book in the series (Emerald Publishing, 2026), while acknowledging the powerful contribution of higher education institutions (HEIs) to all 17 goals, focuses on SDG3 'Good Health and Well-being' that seeks to 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages' (UN, n.d.-b). Reflecting SDG3 targets (see Table 1), the 12 chapters offer actionable and scalable descriptions of work by HEIs that contribute to achieving the goal of good health and well-being. The curated examples seek to reflect a range of global efforts, from the creation of novel academic structures and programmes (Chapters 1–4) to innovation in faculty and curriculum development (Chapters 5–7), and explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in advancing SDG3 (Chapters 8 and 9) together with illustrative cases concerning universal health coverage, tuberculosis (TB), and environmental health (Chapters 10–12); not all of the targets are illustrated with cases, but the work of HEIs contributes to them all.

While there have been material health gains since the global goals were launched in 2015, such as a decline in the maternal mortality ratio and under-five mortality rate, improvements are

Table 1. Targets of SDG3 to Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-being for All at All Ages with Mapping to Book Chapters That Illustrate Actionable and Scalable Descriptions of Work by HEIs.

Targets	Details	Mapping to Chapters
3.1. Maternal mortality	By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	Chapter 9
3.2. Neonatal and child mortality	By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under five years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-five mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births	Chapter 9
3.3. Infectious diseases	By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, waterborne diseases, and other communicable diseases	Chapters 4 and 11
3.4. Noncommunicable diseases	By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	Chapters 3, 6, 8
3.5. Substance abuse	Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	Chapter 3
3.6. Road traffic	By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	–
3.7. Sexual and reproductive health	By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes	Chapters 4 and 9
3.8. Universal health coverage	Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare services, and access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	Chapters 1 and 10

3.9. Environmental health	By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination	Chapters 5 and 12
Means of implementation for the targets	*3.a. Tobacco control:* Strengthen the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	–
	3.b. Medicines and vaccines: Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and noncommunicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries. Provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines in accordance with the Doha Declaration on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to the fullest use of the provisions in the Agreement on TRIPS regarding flexibilities to protect public health and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	–
	3.c. Health financing and workforce: Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training, and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing states	Chapters 1, 2, 5, and 6
	3.d. Emergency preparedness: Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction, and management of national and global health risks	Chapters 1, 7, and 8

Source: Adapted from WHO (n.d.-a).

less than those needed to meet SDG3 targets (Wei et al., 2025). For example, despite HIV-related deaths coming down by half, this belies the lack of access to treatment for millions and the rise in infection rates in certain areas and groups (World Health Organization (WHO), n.d.-b); TB infections are also on the rise (WHO, n.d.-c). Universal health coverage includes less than half the global population, with healthcare costs rising beyond the means of one in three, including increasing numbers of the middle class (Bujang, 2026). The COVID-19 pandemic revealed stark health inequities and reminded the world about the fragility of health systems (McNamara et al., 2022). Conflict and extreme weather events are contributing to mass migration, leading to increased urbanisation and informal settlements, putting pressure on already stretched healthcare and public health services (Corlin et al., 2026; Nagle Alverio et al., 2025). As such, there is a profound and urgent need for HEIs to innovate and scale their efforts to better support the timely achievement of SDG3.

This book offers a suite of case studies and accounts that illustrate some ways universities and colleges incorporate SDG3 into education, research, and partnerships and is a call to action to do more. From a global research university elaborating an entirely new business school to focus solely on health (Chapter 1), to the use of AI to advance data-driven healthcare (Chapters 8 and 9), an account of the road to universal healthcare coverage (Chapter 10), ways to build SDG3 education into a range of health professional courses (Chapters 6 and 7), a novel pan-institutional fellowship programme focused on environmental justice (Chapter 5), and the development of programmes (Chapters 2–4), this book offers solutions targeting the eradication of TB (Chapter 11) and environmental waste (Chapter 12). These accounts provide an opportunity for others to tailor work to their local context and amplify the collective impact of HEIs in delivering SDG3.

With SDG3, HEIs participate in multiple dimensions, including the education and training of a variety of health professionals, advancing biomedical research and policy solutions to address the social determinants of health, and supporting systems change

through leadership and governance. Increasingly, technological solutions from apps to AI-driven approaches (Chapters 8 and 9) are important to meeting SDG3 targets, especially in resource-poor environs. This book also includes some new structural models as universities bring together resources to support health as a business sector (Chapter 1) as well as gear up to meet national and regional health priorities (Chapters 2, 3, and 11). From a case that documents the development of a professional programme addressing nationwide mental health needs (Chapter 3) to a national scheme to create a cadre of environmental and social justice scholars (Chapter 5), this book reflects innovative practice by HEIs fuelled by the urgency of Agenda 2030 and opportunities to improve global health and well-being.

Universities are dominant in leading global health efforts, typically working in concert with health systems, and international rankings now reflect their efforts in tackling SDG3 (Gharzeddine & Davies, 2025; *Times Higher Education*, n.d.). Key to their impact is work with diverse populations, especially those who are underserved by health services, as well as outreach related to mental well-being and sexual and reproductive health services. However, HEIs have not fully embraced interprofessional learning and too few are embedded in community health settings. Further, given the complexity of the health ecosystem and the need to work in concert with others, healthcare students need more education and training in leadership, governance, and finance. Given life expectancy has decreased over recent years (Heuveline, 2022), partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health is worsening (WHO, n.d.-d), and an ageing global population brings a rise in comorbidities, the demand for health services is growing (Chowdhury et al., 2023). HEIs must therefore amplify their contribution to advancing health and well-being in support of SDG3 and look beyond Agenda 2030. This book offers insights selected from across the globe, including Australia, Canada, China, India, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, the United States, and the United Kingdom that can inform a more strategic intent by HEIs to help create a world that leaves no one behind when it comes to achieving SDG3 'Good Health and Well-being'.

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