

Community perceptions of a university botanic garden's alignment with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals

T.M. MacDonald

University of Dundee, Dundee, United Kingdom

Corresponding author email: 2438369@dundee.ac.uk

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This presentation will review and highlight research which has analysed community perceptions of the role, value, and impact of a university botanic garden and their effort towards creating a more sustainable future and how those efforts relate and contribute to the progression of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adopted in 2015 by all United Nation Member States, and subsequently by others across the globe, the SDGs provide a useful and relevant framework. The role of the individual botanic garden and potential contribution to the SDGs was assessed by community members and subsequently analysed by the researcher. Uniquely placed, this research demonstrates the intricate interplay between the work of the university botanic garden and the global sustainability agenda through diverse stakeholder perceptions via a survey, interviews, and World Café sessions. Stakeholders included the botanic garden staff and volunteers, university affiliated staff and students, external partners, young people, and general community members from a range of different activities and initiatives. By including various groups and members, the research showcased different levels of understanding and interpretations of interconnectivity between botanic garden work and the SDGs. The presentation will highlight these perceived relationships through systems thinking. By contextualising the work of the botanic garden within the framework of the SDGs, the research offers valuable insights from community members into the alignment between local and global sustainability efforts and sheds light on the relevance of botanic gardens in addressing pressing environmental challenges and advancing the broader sustainability agenda.