



# Developing a Sustainable Development Goals Research Hub among MERCOSUR's Universities: A Case Study



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**Abstract:** The United Nations 2030 Agenda places universities as a hub of idea generators, which impulse and improve sustainable development. In the agenda, universities are considered vital to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), because they are where experienced actor and young actor converge. These actors are good at developing actions of change, breeding innovation and creating a vision to the future. South Korea is one of the countries that took hold of the 2030 Agenda, providing an example of good international cooperation. The country is also known for its adaptable educational programs, which suits the complex and fast-changing demands of the world. South Korea has been working about its capacity to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into the body of university students and academic research from the base generations. In the MERCOSUR, the Sustainable Development Goals advance in the university's agenda have been pragmatic and differs from country to country. This paper treats a South Korean university, Yonsei University, as a role model of a research hub for the Sustainable Development Goals, and demonstrates that the model has been evoked for students and to stimulate its replicability in the MERCOSUR. This action would be highly benefited because of the Free Trade Agreement between MERCOSUR and South Korea.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development goals (SDG); Free trade agreement; MERCOSUR; South Korea; Research hub; University; Student's impact

## 1. Introduction

Preceded by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are 17 goals under the framework of person, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership (5P). The SDG vision, which covers a dynamic and conflictive agenda under a multidimensional approach, attempts to involve different sectors of the society, and give an integrated strategy/policy to multilevel problems. The main challenges to the SDG are the same as those of the MDG: putting an end to poverty and health. However, the SDG adds a multidimensional approach of sustainability by including environmental preservation, gender equity, economic sustainable development (UNDP, 2022).

The MERCOSUR was funded in 1991 to breed a common market with the two major commercial countries in the South Cone, Brazil and Argentina. Together with Paraguay and Uruguay, they offered an economic development scenario for the region but with a limited cohesion. Thus, the Latin American region responds to the SDG through its institutions and its desire to lessen vulnerability, inequality gaps, and the likelihood of growth. As a result, nations like Uruguay have not taken any overt measures to improve their universities.

According to this observation, the SDG integrated into college communities represents a convergence place of scientific knowledge, governance, and partnership development both within and externally, covering instructions on how to put creative answers to challenges both now and in the future into practice (Kestin et al. 2017). Hence, college education is a key actor to reach the SDG because it represents a space of conjunction of the students, the experience of the faculty staff, as well as researchers and actors from different sectors. As stated by Trencher et al. (2013), the sustainable development is materialized as technology transfer and social co-creation through immersion and synergy.

## 2. Methodology

The following academic article was developed under a methodology of qualitative analysis and recompilation of data from already published academic articles and books. Those articles were used for the pertinence and justification of the SDG importance in universities and how was developed around world. Developing an emphasize on its potentialities in MERCOSUR and South Korea. The bibliography was mainly from open access articles from Google Academics, Dialnet, and for those that are not open for disclosure it has been asked for permission to access and use it in the platform ResearchGate. Likewise, the article has explored documents issued by specialized agencies from the United Nations, governments and international organizations.

Regarding the observation, it has to highlight the development of interviews with Uruguayan academics about the situation of the SDG in national universities. The knowledge that was provided was essential in order to comprehend the surrounding environment. Although these interviews were not aimed for this academic article, it helped to understand how important it is to keep in mind this project. Moreover, this project stills in an incipient phase but, the article offers a perspective of its viability as well as the most likely phases of implementation to follow.

The weight of the interviews that were developed are not equal to the analysis of documents because the priority was given to the published academical articles. In this way, the article follows this structure: presentation of SDG pertinence in the global education, the current situation of the MERCOSUR, the previous experience of South Korea about the SDG and the Global Citizenship Education (GCE). Lastly, the possibility of knowledge exchange in order to establish the Research Hub based on SDG in the MERCOSUR.

## 3. Results

The following section develops the key fundamentals of SDG inclusion in universities while taking into accounts the tools that MERCOSUR already possesses. Likewise, the article will expose the case of Yonsei University's research center called Institute for Global Engagement and Empowerment (IGEE) and its function inside the university.

### 3.1 Pertinence of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in the MERCOSUR Universities

In the framework of the 2030 Agenda, the SDG are the results of a consensual process of agreement among the United Nation's members and, lately, was written UNCTAD (2015) named as "Transform our world: Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development". The document, on its preamble defines the 2030 Agenda as "an action plan in favor of the people, planet and prosperity" (UNCTAD, 2015). Motivated by the regional agenda such as Montevideo Agenda, in the last decade, MERCOSUR has instituted plans with an approach for accessibility of vulnerable people, citizenship governability and funded the Fund for Structural Convergence of the MERCOSUR (FOCEM), in Spanish, Fondo para la Convergencia Estructural del MERCOSUR.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthen the social gaps regarding the coverage and accessibility to digital education in the population of the MERCOSUR. Although virtuality closed the scope of virtual studies to many other, in the case of communities that lacked on recourses and digital accessibility, the situation worsened. Especially for kids in vulnerable situation, therefore, in universities, they adapted public policies of "formative continuity support" (Astur et al., 2020). Based on the studies of Astur et al. (2020), the complexity of this niche was regarding the lack of employment, lack of payment such as universities' monthly, flimsy virtual mode, as well as, the lockdown. For that reason, it is needed to question of an SDG model inside the universities is capable to reduce the gaps created by the COVID or will strengthen the local or regional partnership to solve common problems.

In this sense, the universities should produce direct results liked to the transference of applicable knowledge and indirectly through development of enterprises and enhancement of innovative entrepreneurship with social and technological approach (Galdós et al., 2020). The incorporation of SDG into the university lifestyle must transform itself into a key element for development of sustainable communities and networks of collaboration. This stimulates the importance of global networking, good practices, search for alternative funding, development of essential sectors, critical capacity to evaluate and analysis of challenges of the vulnerable population.

Universities represents an important engine for empowerment, management, leadership of the new generation, and space of experience and dynamic to impulse possible solutions into complex realities. There should be and SDG perspective, recognizing the principle of sheared responsibility of the agenda. This principle is where the university assumes, as a part of the conjunction of actors from the environment, compliance of the mentioned responsibility. Guided by the principle of subsidiaries, it recognizes the capacity of each actor to contribute under its role. Assuming that the institution has a capacity of social transformation, and as a consequence, they have more sheared responsibilities in the fight against big challenges of the society (UNESCO, 2017).

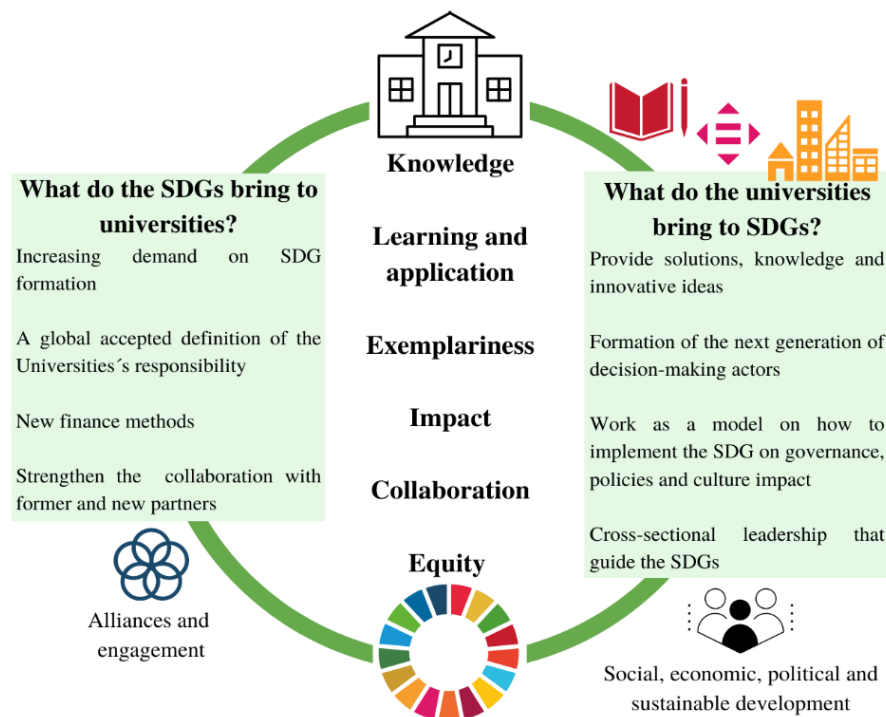
Subsequently, it is clear that need of having an explicit recognition about the capacity of the institution to hold this action and understanding the responsibilities of superior education with deepened intensity and engagement. It is not only needed to be recognized on professors and researchers' activity but also in the public policies oriented to sustainability challenges (Körfgen et al., 2018).

Additionally, to tackle the SDG in a global and transversal manner when strategies, policies and actions represents an opportunity for universities. It eases the integration of different university's polices, social responsibility, human management, cooperation, equity, and sustainability. In order to accomplish, it is needed to involve the whole university community though sensibilization and consciousness to wager at an inclusive and sustainable development (Gómez & Solana, 2016).

Besides that, the incorporation of the SDG might offer a variety of benefits and opportunities. Based on the studies of Lamana & Alonso (2019), they highlight the importance of universities on its surroundings because the institution is a platform where external partners such as governments, sponsors and citizens can observe how the university is contributing to the social well-being. On the other hand, education is the primary service of educational institute, so they respond directly to the SDG 4. Alumni are capable to develop a prospective critic and sensibilization to vulnerable collectives. In that sense, they tend to be committed to the global citizenship.

As Lamana & Alonso (2019) remarked, align the university with an integral and globally accepted definition is primordial to reach the higher standard. It also broadens the opportunities of strategic partnerships and the possibilities of fundings because these type of project answers vital questions that are addressed in funding selective process. Moreover, these projects are an example of scalability, pertinence and sustainability. The universities show that are more capable to adapt into new requirements and potentialities to tie in with project regarding the SDG. Especially those that affect productivity, community's accessibility and environment care. What is more, the SDG provided to the university a common framework with different sectors and actors to work with sheared interests.

As it can be observed in Figure 1, feedback and align of interest is important among interested sectors. Especially, among public and private sector due to its relevance in the labor market. So, the image is based on the graphic produced by Kestin et al. (2017), however, it includes key element for learning and application, and equity that is needed to face the development. Specifically, the participation of minorities such as women, Afro-descendant people, indigenous and more people that could be in a marginal situation. The point of view of sustainable development such as social, economic and political development was also included. Therefore, it was highlighted the SDG of partnership, education, cities and sustainable communities and reduce inequities.



**Figure 1.** The relation between SDG and universities

Source: Self-production based on data from Kestin et al. (2017)

The choice of highlighting the SDG 4, 5, 10 and 17 came in hand with the regional Agenda's priority, most of it addresses the urban increment and reduction of social gaps. Moreover, the studies produced by Latinobarómetro, a research institute of the Inter-American Bank for Development, remarked the regional integration as a way to reach better opportunities for development, knowledge exchange and stability (Latinobarómetro, 2021). Likewise, all the SDG are included as a transversal impact and the importance of multisectoral relies in the communities that work together.

### 3.2 The Implementation of the SDG in South Korean Universities

The universities are a center, by excellence, of critical and innovative ideas management given by students, professors, research teams, authorities and related actors. Being an atmosphere of learning and continuous dynamism, it allows to approach projects under the SDG perspective with a link to the economic, social, political and environmental development as vital components for the sustainable development. For that reason, including the SDG as core values stimulates the critical capacity, student's leadership and development of innovative ideas to tackle problematic situation in multisectoral and multiscale. South Korea has been one of the exemplary countries that included the SDG on its educational curriculums, with a high emphasis on knowledge management on industries where they are leaders such as innovation, automotive, and urban sustainability.

The education with a model of GCE comes in as a part to understand that people can work together globally and with a vision to understand the world, even though the complexity and the required to act locally. Relating the studies of Cho (2016), the South Korean government complemented the educational model GCE though a neoliberal and humanistic approach. Not only showing the power of leadership but also exporting its own educational good practices. Mostly, to developing countries to promote the developmental state model. Because of that, the South Korean government tends to see its model of GCE as a position to the world. The plan includes an "integrated curriculum, teaching materials and training to Official Development Aid (ODA) receipt countries" (Cho, 2016). Notwithstanding, the critic that Cho (2016) establish is that there have not been improvements about the core fundamental values of equity, social justice and sustainable world. Because it is an approach oriented to market and it does not consider problems rooted to distribution of power and accessibility. This power gives more privileges to those who already had power. Nevertheless, Noh (2020), exposes that the curriculums that professors have follow tend to be centered in those problems that they feel comfortable to use unpolitic language. Based on the OECD (2022), Korea has the worst gender gap among the OECD members, being 31.6% in 2021.

The process of implementing a GCE discursive with prospective to students as an active individual and partnership, allows to the student to get to know different realities, to work with other universities and apply good practices onto its own courses. This motivation could be considered as one of the many reasons that allowed South Korea to integrate the universities' ranking the Impact Ranking of Times Higher Education (THE). Even though there are some discordances between the showed results of the ranking and the SDG's development, THE continues to be the only ranking capable of evaluating the development of the universities through an SDG framework (Bautista-Puig et al., 2022). South Korea was able to place five universities into the 100 Top: Kyungpook National University (13°), Yonsei University (27°), Kyung Hee University (74°), Hanyang University (92°), Jeonbuk National University (95°).

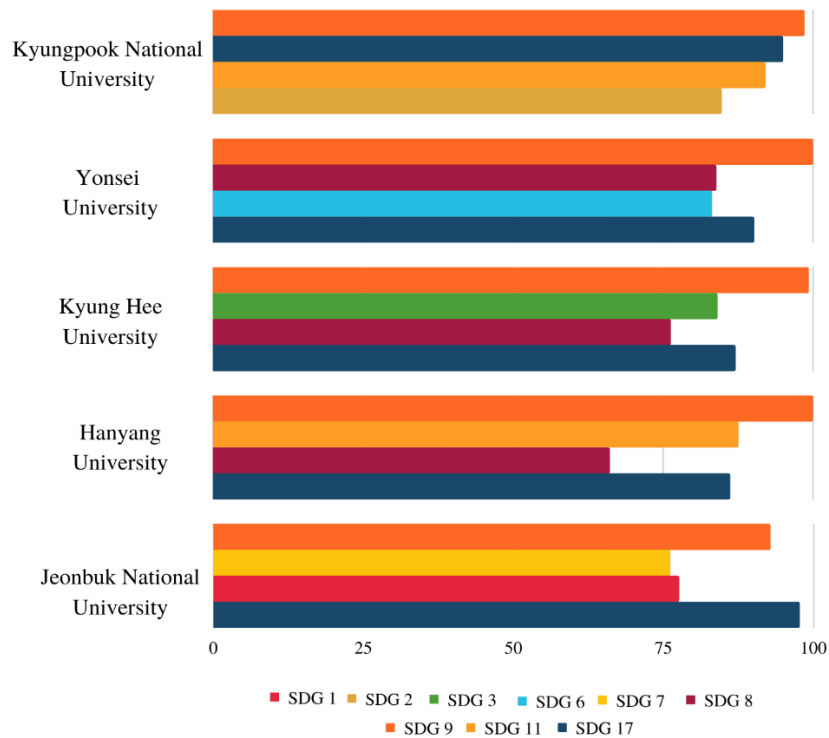
The SDG that had the best score was the SDG 9 about Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, with an average of 99 over 100 points. Under the studies of Noh (2021), the SDG 9 was taken as one of the core goals with better strategy of development. What is more, it could be considered that the country's brand is related to the development through industrial innovation, technology and soft power.

As it is shown in Figure 2, Korean universities have a clear priority and notable performance to face the future under a developmental approach of soft power and reduction of risk indulgence of future market challenges. This reinforces the country brand image as a country that is highly capable to give modern, technological and students with a quality in knowledge. The existence of a new paradigm between education and economic growth has revealed that growth impulses the management of reformative policies in education (Bouzahzah, 2021). Although of this paradigm, the implementation of adequate measures depends on the initial situation of the educational system, the level of ambition, the level and formulation of goals, as well as the materialization of policies based on the allocation of funding (Bouzahzah, 2021).

Yonsei University is the first international university in South Korea funded in 1885 in the capitol Seoul. In 2017, the institute founded a research institute with an SDG approach called IGEE having as its Honorary President the pervious United Nations' General Secretariat Ban Ki-Moon. While its valuable partnership is the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Ban Ki-Moon Center for Global Citizens and the association University Social Responsibility Network (URS).

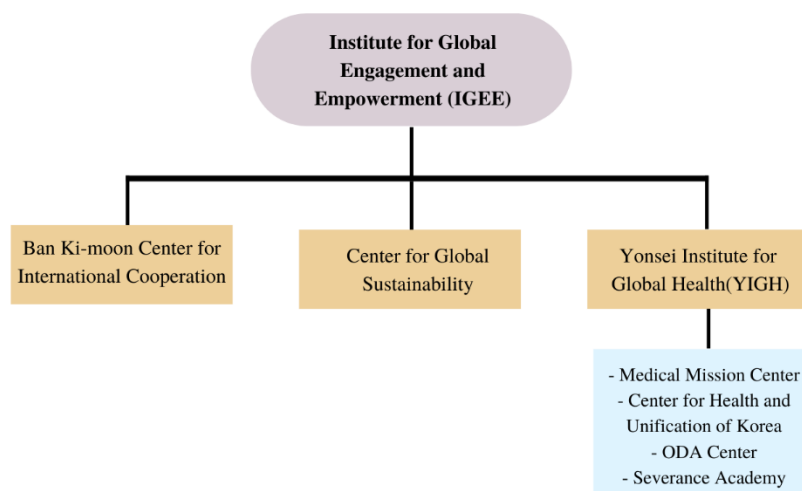
The exclusivity of the IGEE institute relies on its organizational composition and its complementary to the 2030 Agenda. IGEE is divided into three centers and institutes that work together in order to IGEE develops its activities. Except for the Yonsei Institute for Global Health (YIGH), that is centered on the advice of the SDG 3 about health, the rest of the centers compact with the sustainable development under different perspectives.

Surges in that way that the international cooperation enters as a medium for the Ban Ki-Moon center to offer strategic partnerships in the worldwide environment. The institute IGEE has achieved seminars with authorities such as Amina J. Mohammed Deputy of the United Nation's General Secretariat, Vibeke Jensen Director of Peace Division and Sustainable Development of UNESCO and famous activist such as Angelina Jolie. The institute Center for Global Sustainability is even more complex because it carries the mission to hold and be the nexus dialogue point between the institute and point of joint among the seventeen goals of the United Nations.



**Figure 2.** Top ranked South Korean universities and its best ranked SDG  
Source: Self-production based on data extracted from Times Higher Education

Figure 3 shows that IGEE has an important consideration for international cooperation and the Official Development Aid (ODA). This could be identified for the collaborative characteristic of the country. South Korea, until the 90s, was a receipt aid country. The country used its funding to restructure its industries; starting from the 60s with heavy industries (SaKong & Koh, 2010). Currently, the Asian country is considered as the only country that was able to change its status from developing to developed.



**Figure 3.** IGEE organigram  
Source: Self-production



## 4. Discussion

The following section will present an analysis between what was exposed about the SDG in Yonsei University and the viable ways of how it could be replicated in the MERCOSUR. Considering that the universities have a previous knowledge or already work with the SDG. However, the implementation of the SDG as a pillar for sustainability, still weak and the heterogeneities could represent one of the weaknesses to tackle.

### 4.1 Implications for the MERCOSUR's Universities

The MERCOSUR already has elements that covers the SDG intentions. Among these elements it could be seen the Government School for Social Policies (in Spanish, Escuela de Gobierno de Políticas Sociales), the MERCOSUR Social Institute (in Spanish, Instituto Social del MERCOSUR and its acronym is ISM), and the FOCEM that could be observed as a funding actor because it has a social cohesion impact. However, the social cohesion factor results unstable despite the growing number of seminars and projects about education for development that are offered. The unattended population and places where governability of the State is weak are threads that an SDG Research Hub should assist primordially. Because when the national governability fails, it is very difficult to develop a global citizenship without breaking up in favor of the higher social classes.

On the other hand, it has to be highlighted that replicating a Yonsei University – IGEE model will strengthen the already existent ties between the Asian country and the MERCOSUR. Likewise, it will ease and stimulate more fertile rounds of negotiation that have been taken since 2017 to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Regulating and providing a common framework of knowledge exchange, good practices, adaptability, and exchange resources for professors, online learning and academic exchanges.

Regarding the funding implications, there are various models that universities of the MERCOSUR could access but there are some limitations. On the one hand, having only internal fundings will make the project unsustainable, it is viable to search for triangular cooperation. It can also be observed an important different between South Korea and MERCOSUR, the investment in education, between GDP and public expenses, in relative terms is not so distant, however, in absolute terms the investment differs arduously.

Taking into accounts that the following numbers of public expenses covers from primary school to universities, until 2021, South Korea dedicated 5,1% of its GDP (OECD, 2021), which refers in net terms to 64 thousand millions of American dollars (Statista, 2022). Meanwhile, the MERCOSUR in 2021, had a public expense in education nearly 5,6% of its GDP for Brazil, 4,8% in Argentina, 3,8% in Uruguay (M24, 2022) and 3,3% in Paraguay (World Bank, 2022). A critical tendency that can be seen among members of the MERCOSUR is that all of them have shrink their public expenses for education. This action has led to several public strikes and has a negative connotation to the public administrations. Based on data extracted from the World Banks, in Argentina since 2018, the public expenses for education have reduced in one percentual point, in Paraguay almost a point and a half since 2014; in Brazil the education peaked in 6,3%/GDP in 2017 and in Uruguay had its peak in 2019 with 4,7%/GDP (World Bank-UNESCO, 2022).

Therefore, external fundings are also a worry because MERCOSUR's countries are considered as middle-income country or high-income countries, which confirms lower levels of granting and fundings. Those that are received are likely to be developed under the commercial perspective rather than social (Engen & Prizzon, 2019). Aiming to reach other alternatives, Uruguay received fundings from South Korea through multilateral agencies for a science of health project in partnership with Seoul National University (Zimani et al., 2021). But it could also be explored the opportunities of fundings coming from KOICA.

It is because of these heterogeneities that the project is relevant on its content, the existent ties, deepened both parts and the desire of the universities to join an important project that tackles the world's compliance. The SDG might be a method to reach alliances, tackle challenges that have not appeared in a medium to long-term responses.

### 4.2 Results and Impacts of the SDG in the Universities

Based on the studies developed by Kestin et al. (2017) we could identify six important macrolevels for commitment: teaching, research, student's body, governance, social impact and global networking. All these levels need to be seen as complementariness with each other's when research is being conducted because there will always be an impact on the student's body through teaching, as well as the more internationalization, the better will be the position of the institution to the global, regional interest. At the level of teaching, the SDG will strengthen the university now dotted with an academic community with knowledge and skills that are able to understand the importance and applicability of the sustainable goals. Broadening the transversal academic formation to implement sustainable solutions and creative based on the rector guidelines of the SDG.

The student's body, as an active-passive receptor, informs itself through the Professor but also, they are capable to include themselves in the researching projects. They should be more engaged in the critical analysis

because universities will be benefited from those students that transforms into impact academics. Authors like Behares (2011), already on his writings, without mentioning explicitly the SDG, promoted a teaching that extrapolates the limits of teaching only from contents. Because this represents a stable version of a determined knowledge. On the contrary, he holds up that learnings should allow originally cemented conceptualization to become a “knowledge about” and keep evolving. Based on Kestin et al. (2017), capacities and sensibilization for the SDG are fomented and used for the creation of innovative solutions through inter and transdisciplinary approaches. At the level of governance, the principles of the SDG results fundamental for management of the public policies and institutional culture. It is relevant to remark that the institutional culture helps “fomenting sustainable practices and resources of the environment management that establishes relations of reciprocal relationship with the civil society” (Ezcurra et al., 2018).

Furthermore, at the level of social impact, the University’s leadership supplies and eases the dialogues for a better strategic partnership and associations with multiple actors. Even more, because of the University’s role in development while offering a promotion of sustainable development such as a think tank. This level delivers to the last macrolevel that is global impact. Involving the university’s community in a global narrative and a global networking allows a better knowledge exchange, the co-creation of theory frameworks or specifics agendas. Having a collective influence on the diplomatic and foreign affairs shapes the country’s interest.

In the case of Uruguay, the country has been showed as a pilot country for development proposals to the region. Uruguay’s adaptation on its universities’ education, opening spaces to empowering their student’s body is a tool for a scalability of a research hub like IGEE. It is necessary the critical capacity of the students to be expressed on academic articles of open access full of knowledge and empowerment for students. This will generate new market niches and recognition.

### 4.3 Possible Steps to Incorporate the 2030 Agenda in a University

This last section assumes that the university is committed to the project, there is a financial method for the consecution of this project and has signed a memorandum with a Korean university. Ideally, with the International Cooperation Department of IGEE to develop a mirrored-research institute. The SDG as pillars intertwined with the established university’s pillars must be observed as a progressive construction. As follow, it is enclosed a table with a pilot project designed for the introduction of the SDG in a University. This table assumes that the university accepted the projects and has approval for a financial method for no longer than two years.

As it can be observed in Table 1, the first step is to provide a training and courses that will promote the education for development for the highest authorities and those who are in charge to teach. Mapping the SDG that are likely to provide a better performance and results, reflects the importance on each professional will acquire while intertwining the SDG with their cemented knowledge. Following up, the design and planification remarks MERCOSUR as a loyal partnership that will align its own regional interests to improve the value chain, science, and innovation. At this point, it can be remarked which cited fields of knowledge are fundamental the economic development such as agribusinesses and reduction of income gaps. Also, it is needed to remark the Triangular Cooperation as an approximation for knowledge exchange, fundings and, sustainability. After having reliable basis, it is recommended to proceed with the project launching together with the academic networking call. This is because the action pretends to create an accessibility to the national and regional university’s body. The event not only should present the topic to the community but also present the expectable results.

**Table 1.** Phases and Actions to take to develop the SDG Research Hub in a university

Phases	Desirable actions
Education for development	Mapping the impact of the SDG in the university, in the academic publication’s axis, professors, research and social projects.
	Carry out workshops for authorities aiming to choose the most proper and desirable SDG to impact. This choice must englobe a social, economic and environmental dimension.
Design and planification	MERCOSUR partnership and Triangular Cooperation (Funding and exchange of good practices)
Execution	Launching event with a networking call: Local speakers and international speakers from universities that already implemented the SDG.
	The first event aims to approach the topic to the university’s body.
	General presentation of the SDG through seminars and college fairs
	Call for academic networking
	Approaching the SDG in Bachelors already existing courses
	Presentation of contests directed to the student’s body to breed a project in order to find a solution for a social problematic

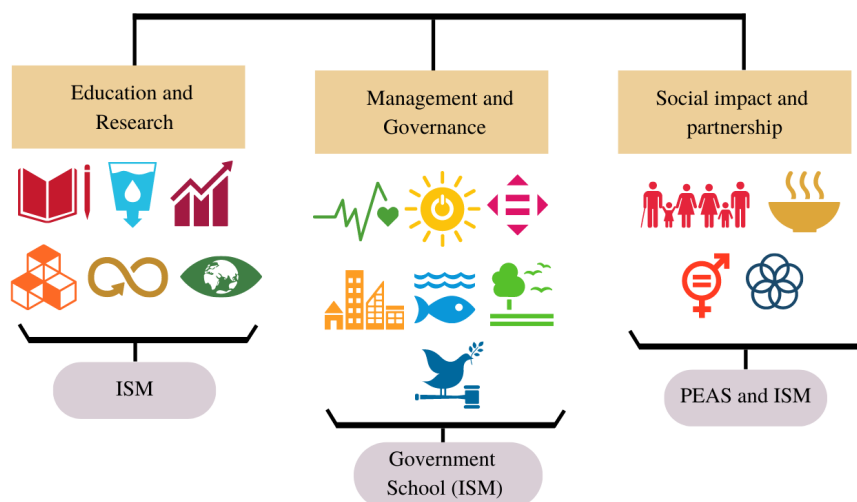
Source: Self-production

Because of being a project of intervention based on the SDG application, it is recommended to choose for a measurement model oriented by goals. An example could be taking the general goal that should be advocated to contribute from the universities' role and sustainable action for the achievements of the SDG. In that way, the specific goal might be centered in the incorporation of the SDG and 2030 Agenda as a pillar for the university. At a regional and international level, it is expected to start the first contact with Yonsei University and the United Nations initiative Academic Impact. At a local level, Uruguay is already on the position to start a long-term relation with universities regarding the SDG implementation.

The development of a universities network SDG-centered inside the MERCOSUR, results a bit diffuse due to the MERCOSUR's heterogeneities and the lack of SDG application in the universities itself. Because of this scenario, it is viable to develop the concept of strategic partnership and foment these partnerships from the knowledge transference and memorandums agreements. It is possible to associate the research department to fields of interest of institutions that have similar fields of interest. Because this action will be easier to stimulate the aligned vision.

Based on this consideration, the common aligned vision embraces the universities' network as a specialized cluster. This allows a deep collaboration inside the MERCOSUR. Moreover, the educational sector must understand that it will not be possible to cover all the SDG at the same level but, a specialization in one SDG looking for a transversal impact on other SDG is highly likely to be more productive for the student's body, beneficiaries, institutions and lead researchers. The institutions can bring up activities based on three levels: Inclusion of vulnerable sectors and people, social impact viability and gender approach.

The Figure 4 shows the basic pillars of education and research, management and governance and, social impact and partnership. It is also included the MERCOSUR institution that collaborate to improve and share good practices regarding the inter-block cooperation, as well as the Strategic Plan of Social Action (in Spanish Plan Estratégico de Acción Social, and its acronym PEAS). PEAS is a tool supervised by the Coordinate Commission of Social Affairs Ministry that "organize hierarchically different technical meetings that are about social development aspects of the block" (García et al., 2018).



**Figure 4.** Pillars for the SDG Research Hub and its MERCOSUR's support unit

Source: Self-production

One of the limits that offers this project is that the MERCOSUR does not have an established framework to cooperate with Asian countries. The projects that have been developed increase the trust among related parts and can reach an impact in the commercial relations. However, working with South Korea could secure the formulation of the FTA and support mediums to establish a stable, progressive and continuous cooperation. In that sense, Uruguay is the country that is closer to deepen this imperative because its National Development Plan not only links completely with the 2030 Agenda and the SDG but also it is established as a 2050 Plan (OPP, 2019).

## 5. Conclusions

The approximation of this study is about the pertinence of this project to the necessity of developing centers oriented to sustainable development in a long term. Also, remarking the need to expanding the solid partnership and good learnings from countries that have joined this movement. This study will continue to deepen as part of



the author's Master's Final Project so, it is expected to give more clear answers about how to project should be carried out in a Uruguayan university, specifically, Uruguayan Catholic University.

On the other hand, taking the already established MERCOSUR's institutes as a key association is vital to promote the social cohesion that has been lost for years. What is more, it will expand the understandings spectrum of the region's need and its communities. Nevertheless, as being a university, the institute should operate with independency and adjust the responsibility that they will assume for sustainable development. In other words, focus on SDG groups and keep rotating this group each year to cover the 5P of the 2030 Agenda properly. The transversalities of the SDG are a modality to keep acting though the SDG that are not priorities. Universities are an institute of continuous training but also a predation for the labor market, so, these institutes should solve the problem of employment creation to reduce insecurities about unemployment and expand the possibilities and opportunities of entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, Universities are spaces that reflect the students' commitment and answers the needs of this students because this are the people that will face the world's challenges. The SDG offers a critic professionalization but its intuition is to sensitize towards problems that are each time more complex. Therefore, this social push has also motivated innovative, adaptable and new solutions. The Korean universities have successfully achieved to specialize into the SDG that are corresponded to national speeches for development. Reinforcing the idea that universities answer prospectively Korea's vision. In order to achieve that, it is required to understand development more that public governability and avoid politization of development. Strengthening the perception of Research Hub as inclusive and to take the students outside their comfort zone. This action increases trust, accessibility, transparency, and the engagement of non-university's body and non-academic to this research institute.

The engagement to the SDG, additionally, to the quality standards of higher education, open the possibility frontier of partnership with higher ranked university and improve their own curriculum to cover multiscale problems. Understanding that it should not be only a search for their own benefit position but to demonstrate that their goals are higher and followed by results. So, it will guarantee that the research included all the affected actors, in a positive and negative way.

This research highlights that the SDG might be included in a universal method but, observing the financial limitations, it is likely that that the SDG will start being covered in specific faculties. Part of the successful model of the South Korean universities is the competition and cooperation among their partnerships. Yonsei University united with relevant institution and increased its power of trust in a national level because Yonsei is considered a privileged university. This leads to think how much Yonsei's infrastructure improved thanks to IGEE or if they already have the recured resourced to establish IGEE.

Lastly, it is undoubtedly that MERCOSUR's universities should advance into the concept of the SDG and include this visionary project. In that way, it will guarantee fluid knowledge and understand that governance is part of education too. Also, the members should understand that they will have differences, especially on partnerships and SDG focus. The heterogeneity could be avoided is the pilot project is taken over by the other aligned universities. Uruguay offers a good scenario of stability in the region, having less universities than in the rest of the MERCOSUR's countries, one public and five private and, a solid institution.

## **Author Contributions**

Review Rui Alexandre Castanho. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript. The relevant terms are explained at the CRediT taxonomy.

## **Data Availability**

The academic article supporting our research results are deposited in Emerald Insight at <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijshe-07-2021-0309>, (Bautista-Puig et al., 2022)

The academic article supporting our research results are deposited in Scholar Works at <https://doi.org/10.7275/9043848.0>, (Cho, 2016)

The academic article supporting our research results are deposited in Research Gate at <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22276.35207>, (Galdós et al., 2020)

The academic article supporting our research results are deposited in Revista Mercosur at <https://doi.org/10.28917/ism.2018-v2-5>, (García et al., 2018)

The academic article supporting our research results are deposited in MDPI at <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10093295>, (Körfggen et al., 2018)

The academic article supporting our research results are deposited in Springer Link at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-67828-3>, (Noh, 2020)

The academic article supporting our research results are deposited in Profesional de la información at <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2021.jul.04>, (Noh, 2021)

The book supporting our research results are deposited in CEPAL Repositorio at <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/1449>, (SaKong & Koh, 2010)

The book supporting our research results are deposited in UNSDSN at <https://www.unsdsn.org/australia-nz-pacific>, (Kestin et al., 2017)

The book supporting our research results are deposited in Oxford Academic at <https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/sct044>, (Trencher et al., 2013)

The book supporting our research results are deposited in UNESCO Biblioteca Digital at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000257931>, (UNESCO, 2017)

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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