



2021 Annual Gathering Report

2021 UGC Annual Gathering Event Report

1. Annual Gathering Overview	1
2021 Purpose/Mission	1
2021 Schedule Overview	2
Organizers	4
2. Attendee Demographics and Impact	5
3. Conference Content and Recordings	7
4. Official Communications	8

1. Annual Gathering Overview

2021 Purpose/Mission

The [University Global Coalition](#)'s (UGC) annual gathering is a time to bring together members and friends of the UGC to share best practices, network, and move towards collective action on our shared goal: integrating the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) into higher education teaching, research, operations, and partnerships. These 17 global goals are a blueprint for addressing some of the world's most pressing challenges by the 2030 deadline. The 17 SDGs include: No 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 Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and Partnerships for the Goals.

This year's gathering was the third annual gathering and the second to be held entirely virtually. It focused primarily on three of the SDGs, based upon relevant world movements this year: SDG2: Zero Hunger, as related to the United Nations

[Food Systems Summit](#); SDG10: Reduced Inequalities, addressing global inequalities in race, gender, and access to resources highlighted/deepened during the Covid-19 pandemic; and SDG13: Climate Action, as related to [COP26](#), the United Nations Climate Change conference. In addition to the three targeted SDGs, this year's gathering had a strong emphasis on youth voices and empowering youth towards global action. The conference committee received session proposals from 27 countries on these and other SDG-related topics.



Above: Day 2 Opening Panel featuring [Millennium Fellowship](#) fellows.

2021 Schedule Overview

The UGC Annual Gathering was held on two dates at different times to invite a global audience:

September 27: 7 pm-10 pm EDT

September 28: 9am-1pm EDT

A detailed schedule for both days is shown below.

Day 1 Schedule: September 27; 7 p.m.-10 p.m. EDT

7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. EDT: Day 1 Opening: Welcome by Georgia Tech President/UGC Steering Committee chair Ángel Cabrera, plenary panel on SDG2: Zero Hunger featuring UC Davis and EARTH University researchers and students

8:00-8:45 p.m.: Concurrent sessions

- From Eco-San Latrines to Diversity in Ocean Science: Driving Sustainable Change Through Collaborative Student Projects
- Students Leading the Way in SDG Engagement
- Human Dignity as the Strategy for Reduced Inequalities
- Developing Sustainable Solutions for Female Entrepreneurs in a Rural Mexican Community through Academic and Social Partnerships
- Collaborating Across Institutions to Advance Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

8:45-9:00 p.m.: Networking/video break

9:00-9:30 p.m.: Plenary panel: Connecting People to Real World Sustainability Projects

9:30-10 p.m.: Facilitated networking discussions

Day 2 Schedule: September 28; 9 a.m.-1 p.m. EDT

9:00 a.m.-9:45 a.m. EDT: Day 2 Opening: Welcome by Georgia Tech President/UGC Steering Committee chair Ángel Cabrera, keynote speaker Brighton Kaoma (Executive Director of SDSN Youth Network), plenary panel featuring the Millennium Fellowship

9:45-10:30 a.m. ET: Concurrent sessions

- Proyecto 5+5: COIL with an SDG focus
- Examining Students' Engagement in Blended Learning: A Case Study of African Development University
- Reinforcing the SDGs through Open Innovation
- SDG Reporting: A Voluntary University Review Workshop
- Powering Purpose-led University-Urban Partnerships for the Goals

10:30-11:00 a.m. ET: Facilitated networking discussions

11:00-11:45 a.m. ET: Concurrent sessions

- Farming around the World: Globally Empowering Student Farms
- Glocal (globally local) Exchange: A Learning Community in Response to Pandemic Food Insecurity

- Strengthening the Local Value Chain of Research to Boost Development and Overcome Global Underrepresentation
- Vertically Integrated Projects for Sustainable Development: Embedding Research-based Education for Sustainable Development in Research Active Universities
- Coordinating Holistic Social Impact Education
- Interdisciplinary Learning and Research: UN SDGs Across an Equitable and Inclusive Curriculum

11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m. ET: Concurrent sessions

- Creating a Global Learning Community Through Digital Storytelling
- Healing a Generation: Higher Education Curricula for Venezuelan Journalism Students Living Under Structural Violence to Promote a Transition into Democracy
- Planeación e inclusión social: claves para la territorialización de los ODS en Colombia
- Partnerships in Research, Academics, and Operations to Advance the SDGs: A Case Study of George Mason University
- Scaling Sustainable Impact through University-Based Social Innovation Accelerators

12:30-1:00 p.m. ET: Closing: Plenary panel on SDG13: Climate Action and closing words

Organizers

The conference committee included members from the University Global Coalition steering committee institutions and a few partner universities. As UGC promotes a collaborative, member-led approach and has limited central administrative capacity, we rely greatly on the expertise and engagement of our steering committee and member institutions to bring events such as the annual gathering to life. Contributing institutions are shown in the graphic below.

About the University Global Coalition: Founded in 2019 by an international group of university leaders, the University Global Coalition (UGC) promotes the incorporation of the United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goals](#) into the teaching, research, operations, and partnerships of higher education institutes through a commitment from institute leadership. The UGC promotes sharing resources and best practices in incorporating the SDGs to transform institutions into global actors with holistic definitions of sustainability. For more information visit <https://universityglobalcoalition.org/> or contact universityglobalcoalition@gmail.com.



Above: Conference steering committee institutions

2. Attendee Demographics and Impact

Demographics

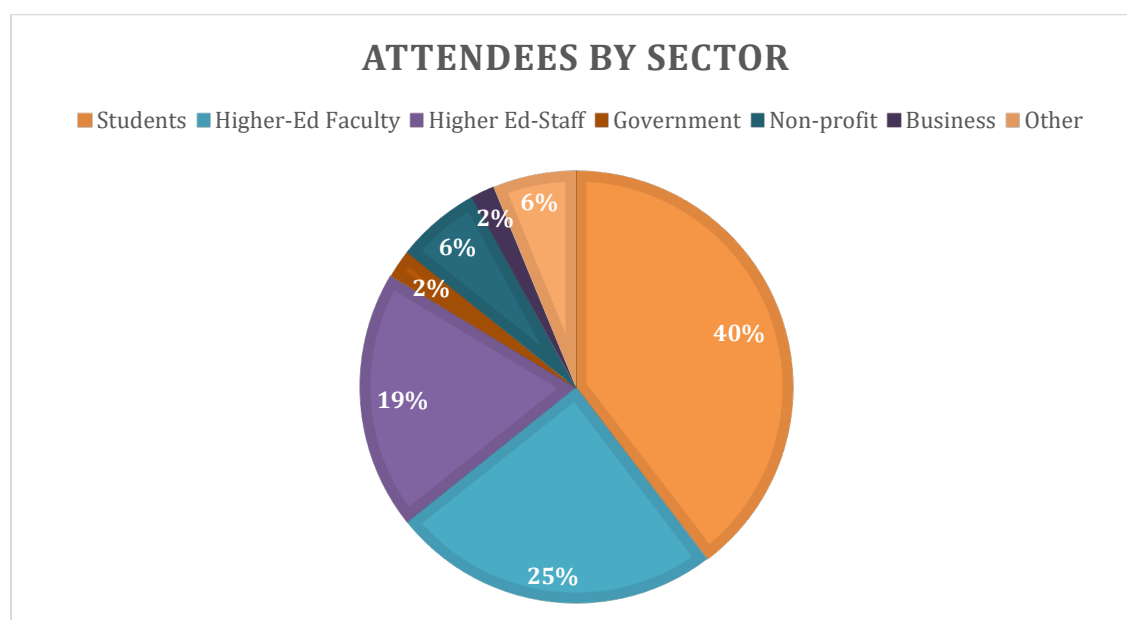
Registration to the University Global Coalition Annual Gathering was offered free of charge thanks to financial sponsorship from Georgia Tech and McGill University. Though UGC may consider charging a small fee (\$5-\$10) for future conferences, keeping the conference as accessible as possible to increase geographic and economic diversity is core to the UGC mission, so we will continue to find ways to support our efforts financially and, if fees are charged, provide scholarships.

Registration by the numbers:

 **744 registrations**

 **75 countries represented**

 **306 organizations represented (breakdown below)**



Impact

The numbers above show geographic and sector reach; however, impact occurred in more qualitative ways as well, including:

- Partnerships to SDG-focused youth networks developed through keynote and plenary panel presentations, including [SDSN Youth Network](#) and [Millennium Campus Network](#).
- Partnerships strengthened with presenters in United Nations divisions, including [UNITAR](#), the [CIFAL global network](#), and the [UN Academic Impact](#).

- Education and networking on replicable, scalable SDG-focused practices such as [Education for Sustainable Development](#) and [Voluntary University Reviews](#).

Strengthening Partnerships & Future Outlook

UGC 2021 engaged partners and university networks in the collective goal of “Building Connections and Actions for the SDGs.” The Coalition will capitalize on these partnerships over the next few years. In addition to the annual gathering, UGC organizes an SDG Action & Awareness Week annually in the spring, featuring a calendar of events from a variety of institutions and resources for learning about and taking action on the SDGs. The UGC also furthers its partnership with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) through the Working Group on Open Innovation for the SDGs, co-chaired by UNITAR and the University of Geneva, aiming to leverage the experience of the network to foster a global movement of student-driven, open innovation for the SDGs.

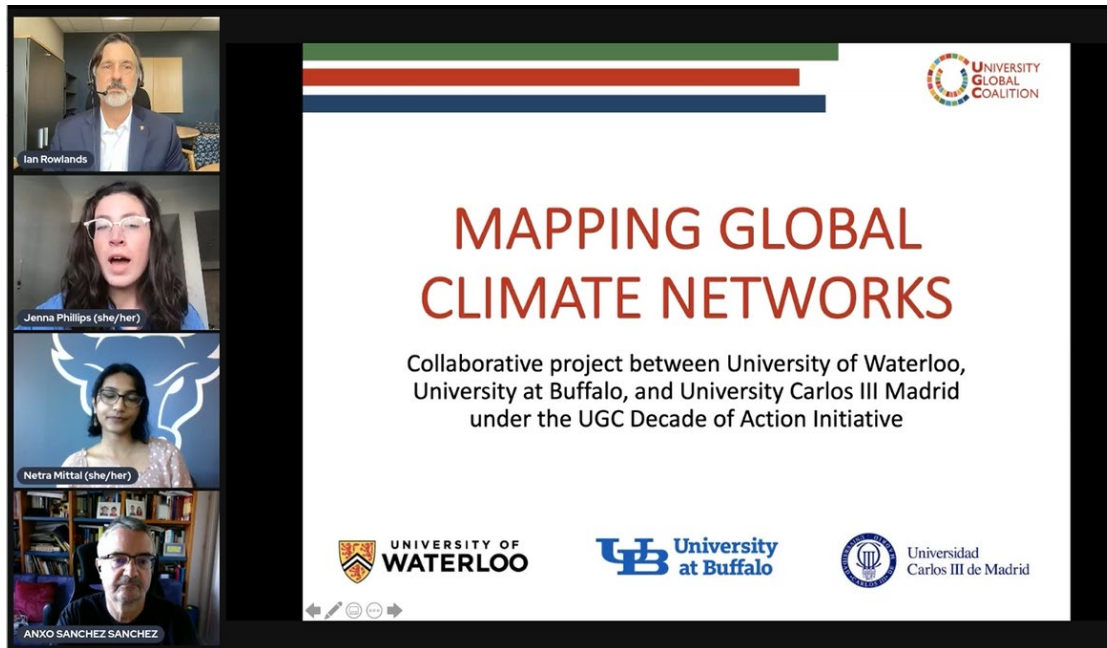
The Working Group, with increasing membership by the UGC community and external partners, has prompted discussions and activities for scaling new learning approaches for the SDGs, with a first milestone in the 2021 Geneva Trialogue on “Scaling Open Innovation for the SDGs”. It has been therefore decided that the University Global Coalition will be co-hosting the annual Geneva Trialogue in the future, as its flagship event in Europe, keeping open innovation as the central event theme. The 2022 Geneva Trialogue will be the kick-off for the 2022 Open Geneva Festival (17-26 March).

The UGC Annual Gathering is hence not a standalone event, but the result of a large UGC community, celebrating progress and sharing best practices. Looking ahead, one of the main UGC’s strategic objectives is to enlarge the community with more institutions, especially from underrepresented regions, like Africa and Asia-Pacific.

3. Conference Content and Recordings

The full set of UGC 2021 conference recordings can be found on the [UGC website, under Resources \(Videos tab\)](#). Opening and closing plenaries and concurrent session recordings are under the header “Annual Gathering Session Recordings,” and short videos from the conference Pavilion are under the header “Lightning Talks.”

Full descriptions and speaker biographies for the opening and closing plenaries and concurrent sessions can be found [here](#).



Above: Day 2 Closing Panel on Mapping Global Climate Networks

4. Official Communications and News Release

UGC Social Media

Social media was the primary method of sharing conference information. UGC's Twitter and LinkedIn accounts are fairly new, so we had a dual challenge of attempting to share information while also gaining a following.

Conference information was also shared through UGC's listserv (~1000 members) and through UGC partners and conference participants.

University Global Coalition (UGC)

- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/university-global-coalition>
- Twitter: @UniGlobalCo
- **UGC Conference Website:** <https://universityglobalcoalition.org/annual-gathering/>

Sample Communications

- **UNITAR News Release:** <https://unitar.org/about/news-stories/news/unitar-supports-university-global-coalition-hosting-its-second-annual-conference>

* REGISTRATION OPEN*



Sample post:

“Register now for the **online UGC Annual Conference taking place on 27 September (7 pm - 10 pm ET) and 28 September (9 am - 1 pm ET). The Conference will facilitate global participation for this year’s theme “Building Connections and Action for the SDGs.”**

Register here and learn more: <https://universityglobalcoalition.org/annual-gathering>

#UGCCConf2021, #SDGAction, #highered, #unis4SDGs, #youthleadership, #equity, #COP26, #UNFoodSystemsSummit #sustainabledevelopmentgoals

Contact Us

If you have any questions about the UGC Annual Gathering or about the mission and work of the UGC in general, please contact us at universityglobalcoalition@gmail.com