

From Sydney to the Andes for a fairer world: the new generations at the heart of SACRU first report dedicated to the Sustainable Development Goals

Milan/Rome – June 30 2025. Young people at the heart of change. The universities of [SACRU](#) (Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities) bring together shared vision and expertise in the Driving Global Change Report, the Alliance's first joint publication dedicated to the Sustainable Development Goals. Resulting from the collaborative contributions of students and faculty from seven partner universities, the Report offers a concrete geography of Catholic academic engagement with the major challenges of sustainability.

Addressed to universities, international institutions, policy-makers, foundations, media, and citizens active in the educational, social, and civic spheres, the Report serves as an invitation to reflect and take action, leaving tangible marks toward a more just future. The collected contributions – produced by 15 students and faculty members – embody a unique approach: international, interdisciplinary, and intergenerational. The Report presents a carefully selected range of Sustainable Development Goals, based on the areas of specialization and most representative initiatives of SACRU universities, from the podcast by Universidade Católica Portuguesa to address the mental health stigma to the irrigation system implemented by Boston College to bring clean water to a village in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

«This document reminds us that caring for our common home is not only a scientific or political necessity but a moral imperative that demands our collective conscience and creativity» **Zlatko Skrbis**, President of SACRU and of the Australian Catholic University, commented. **Pier Sandro Cocconcilli**, SACRU Secretary General and Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences at Università Cattolica, emphasized the role of young people: «Tackling global challenges requires not only the expertise of established academics, but also the fresh perspectives of young researchers and students. Our collective commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals is grounded in the shared belief that sustainable development is a call to action for everyone».

SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being

From the Universidade Católica Portuguesa comes a deep reflection on mental health and the responsibility of universities in promoting healthy and inclusive environments. Sofia Torneiro, a Psychology student and creator of the podcast *MindCast*, shares proposals to raise awareness and overcome stigma, from expanding teletherapy to integrating mental health education into school curricula.

SDG 4 – Quality Education

Universitat Ramon Llull explores the role of artificial intelligence in education, highlighting the need for a digital humanism. The analysis calls for a balance between technological progress and the holistic development of the individual, promoting an inclusive and critical education capable of directing AI toward the common good.

SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation

Boston College addresses the crucial issue of sustainable water management. Its contribution presents a project to provide access to clean water in the Amazonian region of

Ecuador. The initiative combines scientific research, social engagement, and local capacity building.

SDG 13 – Climate Action

From Latin America, UC Chile offers an analysis of climate strategies, encouraging a rethinking of the human–nature relationship in the light of *Laudato Si'*. The contribution underlines the role of universities in shaping ecological awareness and informing public policies based on justice and sustainability.

SDG 15 – Life on Land

Sophia University in Japan draws attention to the *Satoyama* model, an example of harmony between humanity and nature. This cultural and scientific paradigm promotes a dialogue between ecology, spirituality, and responsible land management, offering a sustainable alternative to uncontrolled urbanization.

SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore reflects on the very meaning of “institution” and the need to rediscover the university’s role as a place for critical thinking, responsibility, and civic engagement. The contribution highlights the connection between education and active citizenship in an era of democratic crisis.

SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

ACU underlines the value of international academic alliances like SACRU, showing how collaboration among universities can amplify the impact of research and education initiatives. The synergy between universities, public institutions and international organisations is presented as a key pathway to achieving common goals.

SACRU is an international network that includes the Australian Catholic University (Australia), Boston College (USA), UC Chile (Chile), the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Sophia University (Japan), the Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Portugal), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy), and Universitat Ramon Llull (Spain). The mission of SACRU is to promote global cooperation among Catholic research universities, advancing Higher Education for the Common Good. The SACRU Secretariat is based at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore.

The Sustainable Development Goals are 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all. Each goal addresses key global challenges such as climate change, gender equality, access to education, healthcare, decent work, and social justice.