

ENGAGE CONNECT



EngageSDG Newsletter
October 2024

As we move into the final quarter of the year, the EngageSDG project continues to make progress across its work

Work Package 1

Governance and Management

Second Consortium Meeting 24-27 November 2024

We are delighted to share the good news about our up and coming hybrid event in Mauritius on 25 and 26 November 2024. The logistics information has just been released. The event will take place at the Hennessy Park Hotel, Ebene, Mauritius. Please complete the MSFORMS ASAP for travel and accommodation arrangements. 27 November will be used for some sightseeing activities arranged by our hosts



Delay in Tranche Payments

We are experiencing delays in the tranche payments due to exchange controls by the South African Reserve Bank. This impacts all the international payments. We understand that, once this has been cleared, the other tranche payments will go smoothly. Be assured that we are working on this as fast as we can.

European Partner Updates

We continue to run behind schedule. We will distribute a revised timeline and then request that we all adhere to this please. We each have a role to play towards our end goal, so please bear with us. A recurring theme in the PMC meetings is the lack of communication. Please feel free to reach out to us if you cannot access MSTEAMS or let us know how we can assist.



Work Package 2

Situation Analysis on use of PAs Towards the SDGs

Team Structure and Role Assignment

The WP2 team has successfully defined roles, with responsibilities allocated based on the strengths of its members. The University of Barcelona (UB) leads the Service Learning (SL) efforts, while Southern African Development Community (SADC) members focus on Living Labs, Participatory Action Research, and PALAR. This structure has allowed us to align our resources effectively and ensure focus in each area.

Literature Review and Ethics Clearance

North-West University (NWU) facilitated desktop studies by uploading relevant literature for SADC partners. Ethics clearance was obtained from NWU, enabling the deployment of a survey instrument initially due on 14 August. However, due to low participation, the deadline was extended twice, with the most recent extension to 18 October, with 36 responses received so far. If you can help please contact Bibi Bouwman.

Efforts to Improve Participation

In an effort to boost survey responses, the survey link was resent to all consortium members, and a copy was forwarded to WP1 for upload. The WP2 core team encourages all consortium members to complete the survey, though holding an online workshop was ruled out due to conflicting academic schedules in the southern hemisphere.

European Partner Updates

Our European partners, particularly VUB, made limited progress this month, as many were on holiday. UB will proceed with seeking supplementary ethics clearance and will administer a complementary quantitative survey to further enhance our data collection. Additionally, UB members expressed frustration due to scheduling conflicts with regular Tuesday meetings, which often had low attendance due to teaching commitments.

Communication Improvements

To streamline communication within the WP2 team, a WhatsApp group was created. Though this has helped, delays in scheduling TEAMS meetings persisted throughout September. These issues have since been resolved, though short notice periods for meeting invites remain a challenge.

Draft Report Development

Several team members have participated in meetings, and a draft report has been uploaded to the project files (under the red folder titled "Literature Research Support"). The core team is now expected to review and refine the draft, with the final version due by Tuesday, **8 October**. UZ and NWU will handle the final revisions.

Work Package 3

Building the Integrated Participatory Framework

VUB was not invited to certain internal meetings, but they continue to engage with the research team. Discussions focused on article mining, brief discussion on relevance of WP2 keywords, and exploring the development of a toolkit. The research team completed article extraction relevant to the southern context, finishing this task on **27 September 2024**. The next steps include a meeting on **14 October 2024** with VUB to finalize feedback on data mining.

Work Package 4

Development of a Digital Academic Ecosystem (DAE)



We are pleased to report that the Teams Environment for the Engage SDG Project is now set up and fully functional. This platform will serve as a **central hub** for project members to collaborate, share resources, and communicate effectively.



To ensure that all project members are comfortable using the Teams Environment, we will be hosting additional training sessions in the week of 21 October. These sessions will provide an opportunity for members to ask questions, clarify any doubts, and get hands-on experience with the platform. In another significant development, the project team recently engaged with Obreal's team to discuss the use of their Learning Management System (LMS) for the project. This meeting was highly productive, and we are excited about the potential of the Obreal LMS to support our training and capacity-building objectives.

As a follow-up to the meeting, we shared a requirements gathering and architecture document with Obreal, outlining our specific needs and expectations for the LMS. Obreal is currently reviewing this document and will provide detailed instructions on how to develop training content for the platform. This will ensure that our training programs are tailored to the specific features and functionalities of the LMS.

To further support our instructional design efforts, Obreal has provided us with access to a Sandbox area of the LMS. This will enable us to test and refine our training content, ensuring that it is optimised for the platform and meets the needs of our project members.

We are grateful for the support and collaboration of Obreal's team and look forward to continuing our work together to develop a robust and effective digital academic ecosystem for the Engage SDG Project.

Work Package 5

Pilot Projects on PAs for knowledge
Production at SADC partner Universities

Work Package 6

Development and Implementation Capacity Development Programme on the use of PAs for SADC HEIs

The WP6 team continues to explore goals and options for the eventual learning materials – [please click here to complete the scoping survey if you haven't already!](#) – through internal discussions and meetings with the WP2 team and the Obreal learning platform team. We are awaiting full details on the capabilities of the learning platform and will discuss initial plans at our next meeting.

Work Package 7

Dissemination, Final Report, and Sustainability

Project Branding



The Consortium templates are available in the MSTEAMS folder under WP7. Please make use of these templates when showcasing our work. We thank Obreal's designers for doing a magnificent job.

Please check out our project website at <https://engagesdg.sarua.africa/>.

Our Members Go Far

We're thrilled to share that members of the EngageSDG family attended the IAUP Triennial Conference on AI and the Future of Higher Education in Beijing. It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with global leaders and explore the intersections of AI and education. Here's a snapshot of the team at the event.



We're excited to share that Bibi gave a presentation at the USAf Subcommittee HES CoP on 11 October at 16h00. During her talk, she invited members of the audience to participate in the review and encouraged them to join SARUA. It was a great opportunity to engage with key stakeholders and expand our network

Important Dates

- Situation Analysis closing: 18 October 2024
- Work Package Leads Meeting: 19 November 2024 (Open to the entire consortium)
- Meeting in Mauritius: 24-27 November 2024
- Mauritius meeting registration: 25 October - https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=WcLEgpirw0m_WlhjkV5uaEMczwa73M9HnoxI56aWFthUODZIV01FSVNOV1hONkRYUFEyQ1FaVU0zRS4u



Work Package Members

- **WP1:** René Pellissier, Livia Mecatelli, Chandradeo Bokhoree, Nuria Lorenzo, Maria Asuncion Aneas, Alejandra Montane Lopez, Kibrome Mekonnen
- Haile, Elizabeth Colucci, Angel Rafael
- **WP2:** Beatrix Bouwman, Lesley Wood, Ackim Zulu, Chandradeo Bokhoree, Jackson Phiri, Liberty Mweemba, Nuria Lorenzo, Maria Asuncion Aneas, Alejandra Montane Lopez, Wilma S Nchito, Leo Van Audenhove, Kibrome Mekonnen Haile, Elizabeth Colucci, Angel Rafael
- **WP3:** José Frantz, Lwando Mdeleleni, Althea George, Mario Smith, Pearl Erasmus, Leo Van Audenhove, Carina Veeckman, Cora Van Leeuwen, Franz-Ferdinand Rothe, Toshima Makoondlall-Chadee, Kibrome Mekonnen Haile, Elizabeth Colucci, Angel Rafael
- **WP4:** Abri Hoffman, Jackson Phiri, Ackim Zulu, Ramasamy Coolen, Preeya Vijayalakshmee Ramasamy Coolen, Liberty Mweemba, Kibrome Mekonnen Haile, Elizabeth Colucci, Angel Rafael
- **WP5:** Alessandra Bonoli, Krishnee Adnarian Appadoo, Mahindra Gooroochurn, Preeya Vijaya Ramasamy Coolen, Bitelli Gabriele, Salzano Ernesto, Borgatti Lisa, Brian Mumba, Mwamba Chanda, Sara Pennellini, Liberty Mweemba, Ackim Zulu, Toshima Makoondlall-Chadee, Livia Mecatelli, Dayawatee Goburdhun, Kibrome Mekonnen Haile, Elizabeth Colucci, Angel Rafael
- **WP6:** Sarah Thelen, Livia Mecatelli, Maria Asuncion Aneas, Dean Venables, Cliona Maher, Lesley Wood, Wilma Nchito, Ramasamy Coolen, Preeya Vijayalakshmee Ramasamy Coolen, Nuria Lorenzo, Alejandra Montane Lopez, Kibrome Mekonnen Haile, Elizabeth Colucci, Angel Rafael
- **WP7:** René Pellissier, Preeya Vijayalakshmee Ramasamy Coolen, Toshima Makoondlall-Chadee, Kibrome Mekonnen Haile, Elizabeth Colucci, Angel Rafael

Thank you to everyone for your hard work and contributions to the project. Let's continue to collaborate effectively and achieve our goals together.

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