



京都大学 大学院 総合生存学館

思修館

7th International Symposium on Human Survivability

10 December 2018, Kyoto, Japan

Symposium Hall, International Science Innovation Building (West) 5F,

Yoshida Campus, Kyoto University

“Let’s Work Together Toward Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”

The international symposium is organized by the Graduate School of Advanced Integrated Studies in Human, Survivability (GSAIS/ Shishukan), Kyoto University. Providing a fresh look on global issues, this symposium is inspired and created by current students, motivated by a mutually shared idea of working towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Please access the web site of the symposium to get information about the venue, program, keynote speaker and student profiles, etc. :

<http://www.gsais.kyoto-u.ac.jp/symposium2018/>

Keywords: sustainable development goals, human survivability studies, trans-disciplinary studies, synergy and trade-offs between SDGs, Science-communication.

1. Goals

The main aim of the 7th International Symposium on Human Survivability is to bring together students and scholars in their latest academic research and knowledge to facilitate wider public discussion on solving global issues and moving toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The organizer GSAIS (Graduate School of Advanced Integrated Studies in Human Survivability), also known as “Shishukan” (思修館), holds once a year an international symposium that reflects on the global challenges facing humanity in areas such as energy, water, food, population, diseases, etc. For instance, the 2015 symposium focused on the global energy transformation, or the transition to sustainable sources of energy. The 2016 symposium discussed key issues related to “extreme”, or “low-probability, high-impact” disasters. The 2017 symposium discussed how to bridge the gap between science and culture. In general, GSAIS / Shishukan international symposiums are an important stepping stone for the development of a holistic and transdisciplinary perspective on complex global issues that is also known as “human survivability studies” (HSS). The 2018 symposium takes an academic perspective on the global issues with an overarching concept of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Providing a fresh look, this symposium is inspired and created mostly by current students inspired by a mutually shared idea of working towards achieving SDGs.

2. Background and some key concepts

"We don't have plan B because there is no planet B!"

Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations Secretary-General from 2007 to 2016.
(the main idea behind SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. SDGs are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. The SDGs cover social and economic development issues including poverty, hunger, health, education, global warming, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment and social justice. The goals are broad and interdependent, yet each has a separate list of targets to achieve. There are 169 targets for the 17 goals, all set to be achieved by 2030. Achieving all 169 targets would signal accomplishing all 17 goals.

Although, there is a general public consent that setting SDGs framework in 2015 was a milestone for humanity on its way to sustainable future there are a lot of skepticism as well. Sceptics are casting doubts on whether SDGs are actually achievable and whether they are really effective in encouraging humanity to switch from the "Business as Usual" development path. Furthermore, criticism is cast upon SDGs that some of the SDGs goals and targets might be contradictory to each other. Such negative relation between SDGs are often referred as "trade-offs". For example, seeking high levels of economic growth might undermine ecological, inequality reduction, among other sustainability objectives. Similarly, in the quest of increasing share of renewable energy to reduce GHG emissions, especially from transportation, global demand for biofuels surges, which raises fears of the potential destruction of wildlife habitats by being converted into farmland.

On the other hand, there is a widespread consensus that progress in achieving some SDGs naturally leads to progress in achieving other SDGs. In other words, there are positive relationships between goals and targets, often referred as "co-benefits" or "synergies" between SDGs. For example, making significant progress in the availability of affordable education certainly contributes to reduction of poverty and hunger, brings about improvement of health and well-being among other benefits.

What is more, progress on some of the SDGs will be, in fact, stalled, if they are not pursued together with others. For example, all of the SDGs will be hindered if women's empowerment and gender equality (goal N5) is not prioritized.

Therefore, there is a pressing need to identify such relations between goals and targets and recognize their interactions in order to come up with appropriate solutions and strategies. Virtually all fields of natural and social sciences as well as humanities could be engaged in such task with both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Finally, another criticism, but also a call for action, is that achieving SDGs requires the promotion of multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research across different stakeholders, which can be difficult, particularly when major governments fail to support it. That is why a new kind of study is evolving in the leading universities across the globe that promote Sustainability Studies, or even more comprehensively - Human Survivability Studies (HSS). HSS is an integrated academic field that aims to integrate knowledge or wisdom from individual disciplines related to the survival of mankind and global society with the final goal of contribution to the creation of a sustainable future for humanity. Such is the GSAIS (Graduate School of Advanced Integrated Studies in Human Survivability), also known as "Shishukan" (思修館) - a

new graduate school at Kyoto University that has taken up the challenge to integrate traditional academic disciplines in the search for novel solutions to the global challenges facing humanity. A special feature of its innovative methodology is that humanities/social sciences (grouped in Japanese as bunkei 文系) and natural/life sciences (rikei 理系) are integrated (bunri yugo 文理融合) along a curriculum articulating theory and practice, in reference to the traditional Asian model of the so-called “three wisdoms” (studying, thinking and practicing, or Mon-Shi-Shu 聞思修).

3. The thematical scope of the symposium and its original contribution.

According to the arguments mentioned above the Seventh International Symposium on Human Survivability organized by GSAIS with the topic: “Let’s work together toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals” aims at bringing together students and scholars in their latest academic research to facilitate a wider public discussion within the following scope:

(1) Original study focused on each of SDGs (with emphasis on trans-disciplinary studies).

(2) Synergy and trade-off between SDGs. Some of the goals can be achieved simultaneously, while others require compromise or higher-level solutions. Both quantitative and qualitative studies are included in the scope.

(3) Science communication for effective implementation of research results in society. It is crucial to bridge the gap between the academia and the society, or in other words, between the academic scientific research and implementation of such research results into society. In other words, how do we bring academic research results in to practice for the benefit of the society? How can we raise awareness of a wider public on the importance of such research? Even more generally, how can we promote United Nation’s SDGs framework and the ideas behind it to a wider public?

All these issues are included in the scope of the symposium and will be discussed between the participants including students, researchers, professors, professionals, representatives of international organizations, as well as general public, in a friendly and productive environment.

The symposium will also include a student poster session. The posters will be exhibited in the open space in front of the Symposium Hall. All participants are encouraged to have a discussion with the students who will stand next to their posters during the breaks.

We look forward to your participation in the symposium.

The Organizing Committee of the Seventh International Symposium on Human Survivability
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