

Empowering Students to Become Change Agents

Rebecca Watts Hull, PhD
Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain
Georgia Institute of Technology



Session Question and Learning Goals

How can we empower students to lead change for sustainable development in a variety of contexts?

- Explain why empowering students to participate in social change is a key element of ESD.
- Identify one or two tools or strategies for equipping students to be change-makers that you can incorporate in your SDG teaching.

ESD is
Education *FOR*
Sustainable
Development –

not Education
ABOUT
Sustainable
Development.

WHY Engage Students in Change-Making?

ESD empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society...

ESD is recognized as a key enabler of all Sustainable Development Goals and achieves its purpose by transforming society...

UNESCO 2021



What do we mean when we say “empower students to be change agents”?

Now, as students



In their future workplaces



As community members and citizens



Why engage students in social change- making?

“In all my years of teaching I have never before seen students as pessimistic as they are right now. When we discuss climate change and dig into COP26 negotiations they say they have no faith at all that governments can work together to solve the climate crisis.”

Georgia Tech Professor
of Computing and International Affairs

HOW can we help students see that change is possible and that they can be change-makers?

Share stories of change that engage and empower.



Stephane P.
PHOTOGRAPHIE

What story of change does this image tell?

Chat storm: Please share your response in a single word or short phrase

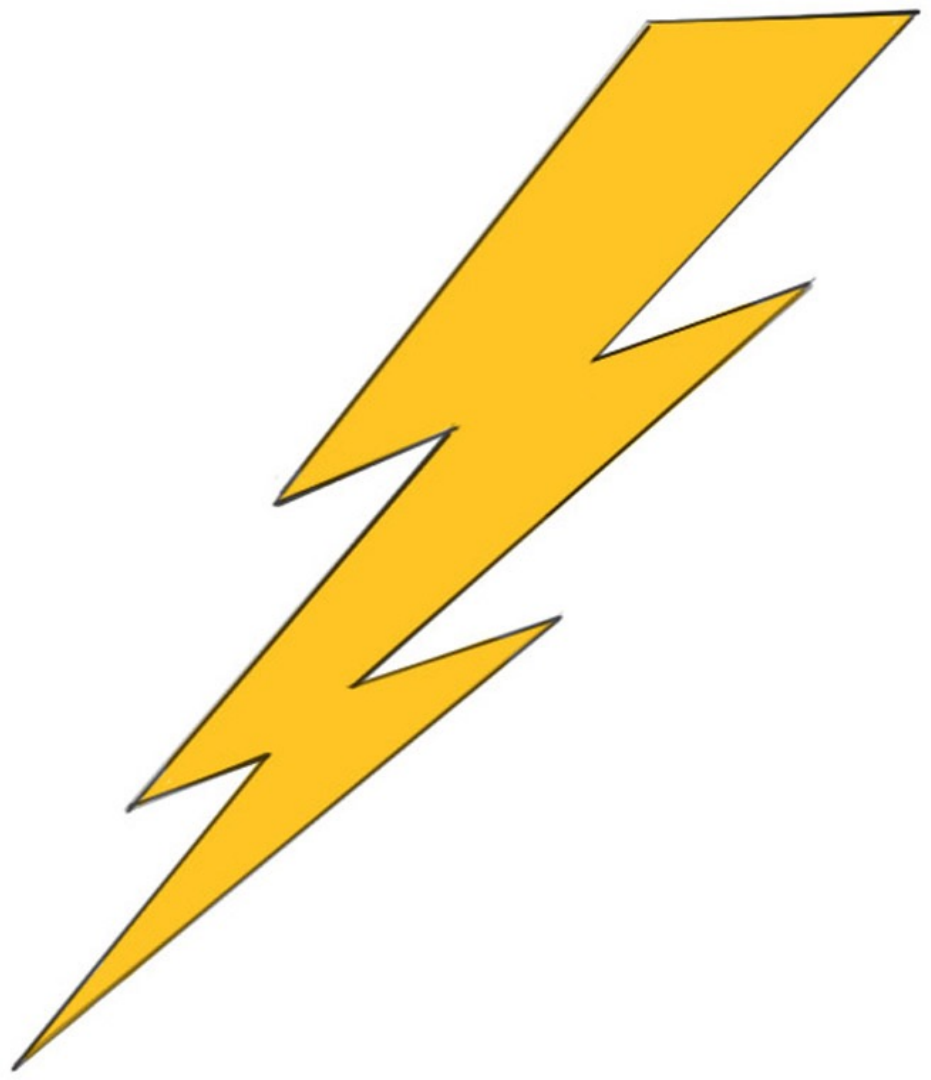
"Greta Thunberg in Paris, february 22th" by [stephane_p](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)



How about
this one?

Photo credit: Callum Shaw,
Unsplash

What kinds of stories
will empower our
students to become
change-makers?



Three Key Ideas

- Social change happens in many ways, at many levels (family, community, region, nation-state, global networks).
- There are many kind of roles people play to advance positive change toward the SDGs, and most are “behind the scenes.”
- Everyone can—and should—contribute.

Share stories that show there are many ways to work for social change.



Help students imagine what their role could be.

Often the most visible 

Weavers: I see the through-lines of connectivity between people, places, organizations, ideas, and movements.

Experimenters: I innovate, pioneer, and invent. I take risks and course-correct as needed.

Frontline Responders: I address community crises by marshaling and organizing resources, networks, and messages.

Visionaries: I imagine and generate our boldest possibilities, hopes and dreams, and remind us of our direction.

Builders: I develop, organize, and implement ideas, practices, people, and resources in service of a collective vision.

Caregivers: I nurture and nourish the people around me by creating and sustaining a community of care, joy, and connection.

Disruptors: I take uncomfortable and risky actions to shake up the status quo, to raise awareness, and to build power.

Healers: I recognize and tend to the generational and current traumas caused by oppressive systems, institutions, policies, and practices.

Storytellers: I craft and share our community stories, cultures, experiences, histories, and possibilities through art, music, media, and movement.

Guides: I teach, counsel, and advise, using my gifts of well-earned discernment and wisdom.

Share stories of change at different scales

Campus

Real Food Challenge: Student Activists Help Campuses Eat Smarter

Author
Seedstock
@Seedstock
December 22, 2015 | Anne_Craig

Institutional food systems are typically a tough nut for food activists to crack, relying as they do on economies of scale and mass logistics. But the

ment toward
e eating has a
hungry, well-
be students –

In 2008, the [Real Food Challenge](#) organization has
peak with one voice for change.

"leverages the power of youth and universities to
y, fair and green food system," according to the
mission statement.



Region

Good
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

GEORGIA ORGANICS

February 10, 2021
4 p.m. EST

Farmer Services **SAAFON**

Culture & Connections: Farmer Organizing the SAAFON Way
Presented by:
Dr. M. Jahi Chappell, Executive Director
Tammy Harris, Agroecology & Education
Resource Coordinator

Community



Truly Living Well Center for Natural Urban Agriculture / Photo credit AJC

World



A march by La Vía Campesina (Ian MacKenzie / Creative Commons)

How can we empower students to become change-makers?

Share stories of change that engage and empower.

Connect students with change-makers and groups working for change.

Guest Speaker —> Field experience —> Semester-long project —> Ongoing collaborative research



Community-Engaged Teaching: Start small



Introduce students to resources and opportunities:

Campus
Student
Organizations

Student &
Youth
Networks

Community-
Based
Organizations

Student
participation on
standing
university
committees

Electives in
Social Change

Non-
Governmental
Organizations
(NGOs)



["First Lady Frances Wolf Visits the Lion's Pantry, Discusses Need to Increase Pennsylvania's Outdated Minimum Wage to Help College Students Meet Basic Needs"](#) by [governortomwolf](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

How can we empower students as change-makers?

Share stories of change that engage and empower.

Connect students with change-makers and groups working for change.

Provide resources and opportunities

Reflect and Connect

- Can you identify a story of change to incorporate in your course?
- What local change-makers could you invite to share their story with your class?
- What campus groups, campaigns, or governance opportunities might interest your students?



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Thank you!

Rebecca Watts Hull, PhD
rwattshull@gatech.edu

