

Towards Diversity and Inclusivity in Sustainability Governance

WCSG incubator project 2021

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Executive summary

What does it mean to be an inclusive, diverse, decolonized and intersectional university research centre specialized in sustainability governance? What are the biases that we have when researching and teaching about sustainability governance? How do we create safe spaces to reflect on these biases and experiences of discrimination at the Wageningen Centre of Sustainability Governance (WCSG)?

With these three questions, a group of eleven researchers from four chair groups - the Law (LAW), Public Administration and Policy (PAP), Forest and Nature Conversation Policy (FNP) and Environmental Policy (ENP) chair groups - started this incubator project. The project was developed as a grassroots initiative to foster connections across all four chair groups in the Wageningen Centre for Sustainability Governance (WCSG), to explore challenges and opportunities to foster genuinely inclusive research and teaching communities in sustainability governance and connect this to cluster-wide actions. Supported by a dedicated research assistant, we conducted an explorative and action-oriented research project to study the challenges, best practices and future opportunities to enhance diversity and counter structural exclusions in our research and education, while also considering the different experiences and perspectives people in the cluster have on discrimination and exclusion in research and education. The study consisted of three main activities: we mapped samples of the chair groups' curricula, conducted a survey among staff, PhD candidates and students (which included questions regarding education and regarding research), and hosted a series of guided group discussions with teachers. **In this report we provide the results of our activities, divided in education-related outcomes and research-related outcomes.** We also reflect on the lessons we learned from our engagement with 'diversity work'.

Regarding **education**, we identified four crucial issues, drawing from the three activities conducted. First, we found that much of the **knowledge** we teach to students focuses on the global North¹, and tends to assume superiority of western science to solve problems in the global South. Second, our curriculum mapping gives an indication of the cluster's education as an **institutionally white space**, based on European/North American authorship. Authors of the mandatory literature were predominantly from European/North American nationalities and/or affiliated to European/North American universities and institutes and most of the lecturers teaching on the sampled WCSG courses were white and European. Third, **stereotyping and discrimination** against different national, cultural or gender identities were experienced by some respondents, both in student-student interaction and student-teacher interaction, both in the classroom and in other interactions. Finally, regarding **teaching pedagogy**, we identified a need to reflect on the often narrow and culturally biased valuation of academic skills, and the need to develop ways of encouraging non-western students to comfortably participate. Getting to know the students, engaging in diverse teaching methods, and reflecting together with students were seen as opportunities to enhance inclusivity in teaching.

Taken together, these findings suggest that our students are predominantly exposed to white role models, read western ideas, and are encouraged to practice western-based academic skills. These findings can imply that students who were not raised or educated in western countries are at a disadvantage in our educational system, on top of facing direct and indirect forms of discrimination and stereotyping. We propose to critically reflect on and act towards enhancing the inclusivity of our teaching to foster equal opportunities to both Dutch and international students.

Regarding **research**, two key issues were raised in the survey responses, **namely underrepresentation of cited scholars from the Global South** and the extractive nature of the research practices on which (part of) sustainability governance studies in the cluster is based, which has been referred to as '**parachute science**'. Respondents recognized underrepresentation of Global South scholars in sustainability governance research because of interrelated structural barriers to their access to and participation in academia. Parachute science refers to extractive

¹ We are aware of the debates around this terminology. We chose this term to indicate scholarship from countries that are industrialized, often considered as high income, while countries in the global South are characterized as non-industrialized, low-income.

research where scientists produce data in a foreign community without giving credit or acknowledging the contributions of the local researchers and research participants. Opportunities to counter this include reflexivity regarding positionality, bias, and privilege in research, and embedding research in co-productive and cross-boundary collaboration in our research projects.

Besides these research results, this incubator project brought about an internal learning process among the researchers involved, as we discussed and reflected on different perspectives on 'diversity work', and the tensions and methodological challenges involved in studying and discussing it. From our collective reflections on these tensions in the group and beyond with colleagues in the cluster, we distilled five insights. First, addressing these issue needs **careful and thoughtful deliberation**, and an environment that facilitates constructive and respectful debate, while we also recognize that discomfort is inherently part of questioning and addressing sensitive issues of racism/institutional whiteness, discrimination, privilege, and colonial legacy. Second, **structural biases need to be tackled at different institutional levels**. Third, it takes **time, resources, and an engaged and active approach** to foster an inclusive university where everybody feels they belong. Fourth, we note the **lack of diversity of people in influential positions** and the marginalization and often more precarious position of others (e.g., those in temporary contracts, especially with an international background, people of colour and women), which also hinders the latter to speak up against the different forms of discrimination this report points out. Fifth, we call on readers to reflect on their **own positionality** (i.e. who they are and their world views, values, and beliefs), the influence they can exert, the privileges they enjoy and consider how each of us can work towards dismantling systems and practices that perpetuate privilege and inequality and move towards a more inclusive, and just academic environment.

Many individuals and groups are already working and taking initiative to address issues regarding diversity and structural exclusions in diverse ways. We acknowledge that our exploratory research does not completely capture the various initiatives, practices and collaborations already taking place. Also, we wish to underline the exploratory and pilot-study nature of our research project, which reduces the generalizability of our results. Nevertheless, the combined results from the survey, curriculum mapping and guided discussions indicate patterns that require concerted cluster-wide reflection and engagement to foster a more inclusive and diverse education and research practice at WCSG. We consider this study as supporting the promotion of equal opportunities and as challenging practices of inequality and discrimination, to foster a more inclusive university. We want to underscore those initiatives to counter discrimination and foster inclusivity are needed from all and point out that momentum for change can be harnessed by those in powerful positions and privileged circumstances within our academic environment.

Finally we are very pleased that this incubator project has been recognized in being awarded the **WUR Gender SMART Award 2022** for the contribution to a safe and respectful WUR culture as part of the Gender+ SMART Equality Benefits All project. We believe this recognition highlights the need to continue conversations and research about diversity and inclusion.

Recommendations for inclusive practices at distinct levels within WCSG are on the following pages.

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Recommendations

Recommendations for graduate schools

- Structurally reserve budget to facilitate reflections on discrimination, diversity and racism at graduate school level.
- Integrate reflection on inclusivity and diversity in teaching materials and pedagogy into BKO/UTQ courses
- Develop non-extractive ethical guidelines to guide research collaborations with local partners, address parachute science, and developing joint research agendas with partners.
- Integrate education about inclusivity and ethics around research collaboration, particularly with local partners, in mandatory PhD courses.

Recommendations for WCSG management team

- Structurally reserve budget to facilitate reflections on discrimination, diversity and racism at a center level.
- Create a toolbox (e.g. in the form of questions) that help course coordinators to reflect on and improve the diversity and inclusiveness of their own course curriculum
- Disseminate and adopt an inclusive glossary (see appendix A for inspiration)
- Initiate mandatory training for teaching staff regarding everyday discrimination in class.
- Set up a cluster-wide post-doc project to ensure embedding of inclusive processes within the cluster and chair groups. The postdoc could: 1) reflect on the appropriateness of methods used when researching on diversity and inclusion; 2) develop resources to help researchers and lecturers to enhance citational justice (e.g. an extensive citation 'cheat-sheet').

Recommendations for chair holders

- Set guidelines and consider quotas to enhance diversity, especially for vacancies in leadership positions.
- Initiate processes and spaces for engagement to enhance everybody's sense of belonging (e.g. exercises with external facilitation, inclusivity in emails).
- For recruitment: actively look for people to fill positions by also using channels that target people from underrepresented and minority backgrounds.
- Show support (moral and financial) for WCSGg members that want to discuss and engage in inclusive practices.
- Take initiative in and reserve budget for in countering discrimination (e.g. initiate workshops that can provide tools for inclusive learning pedagogies such as exercises for group compositions and encouraging intercultural engagement).
- Facilitate the creation of safe spaces for PhDs and staff to talk about experiences of racism and discrimination.
- Facilitate reflection among teachers and course coordinators to ensure diversity in course curriculums.
- Consider experimenting with formulating inclusivity intentions, making pronouns explicit and use communicative signs in chair group meetings (Appendix F & G)

Recommendations for course coordinators

- Collect feedback from students (especially from those from minority background) on their feelings on diversity and inclusion in WCSG education, for example by including diversity and inclusion as a topic in course evaluations, so students can easily and frequently share their experiences.
- Integrate approaches that enhance inclusivity and diversity in education, on learning goals, readings, case studies, examination and teaching pedagogy.
- Integrate approaches to include the work and perspectives of scholars and experts

from different (minority) backgrounds (e.g., (guest)lecturers and diversifying authorship for course literature).

- Make diversity more explicit in general communication (for example by disseminating a glossary (Appendix A) to introduce students to inclusive and diversity concepts and raise awareness)

Recommendations for researchers

- Reflect on the origins and diversity of literature underpinning research and get acquainted with different and marginalized research approaches.
- Set a diversity target for citations from scholars with diverse background (e.g. 50%)
- Include perspectives from developing countries to revise perceptions of sustainability and governance.
- Embed the knowledge produced through research in local context(s), for example by getting to know research participants, their problems and their worldviews.
- Search for diverse voices and backgrounds, diverse epistemologies and reflect on the politics and situatedness of different knowledge practices in your research.
- Identify hierarchies in collaborations especially with international partners (e.g. in funding, resource allocation, research design and execution, etc.) and work toward a fair distribution of tasks.
- Reflect on the appropriateness of methods and research design in terms of diversity and inclusion.
- Reflect on citational justice when peer-reviewing articles.

Recommendations for supervisors (of PhDs/thesis students)

- Incentivize to work in familiar contexts or to establish long term collaborations with local partners.
- Set diversity targets for citations from scholars with different backgrounds (e.g. 50%).

Recommendations for lecturers

- Pay attention to diversity when composing groups in class, while making students aware of the potential challenges (and advantages) of intersectional and intercultural group work.
- Where there are non-Dutch speaking students, encourage all to speak in English.
- Make sure that students can voice their opinion and participate in class in different ways, so everyone's voice is heard.
- Encourage students to use examples and information from different country contexts relevant to the course and facilitate cross-boundary discussions between students from different backgrounds.
- Stimulate and motivate students to search for diverse voices and epistemologies and reflect on the politics and situatedness of different knowledge practices.
- Make use of different case studies and, if possible, ensure balance between Dutch and other examples in course content.
- Reflect on positionalities of research discussed in classes and the implications of how research is conducted.
- Invite different guest lecturers to the course, paying attention to diversity in identities, e.g., gender balance, age, ethnic or racial background or identification and geographical research locations.

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1. Introduction

This report describes a grassroots project to study and enhance feelings of belonging within the Wageningen Centre of Sustainability Governance (WCSG), comprised at the time of research by the Law (LAW), Public Administration and Policy (PAP), Forest and Nature Conversation Policy (FNP) and Environmental Policy (ENP) chair groups. This report is part of a wider movement in which universities, their staff and students work in diverse ways to foster a supportive culture for all current and future employees, and especially those groups that have historically been in marginalized positions, and students. At Wageningen University & Research (WUR), such a process is primarily operationalized through the DARE project. DARE is a collaboration between a local grassroots anti-discrimination organization and Wageningen University. DARE targets three spaces in which discrimination can and does take place in the context of Wageningen University: the university's institutional context (including hiring procedures and wage gaps), education and research. Besides DARE, researchers of several chair groups and clusters have initiated projects to counter discrimination in their own settings (see Appendix H). This report presents insights from one such process, an incubator project within the Wageningen Centre for Sustainability Governance. Incubator projects aim to stimulate and support new and promising research collaborations among staff of the Centre's chair groups.

The initiative presented in this report was conducted in 2021 by a group of eleven project members (see Table 1). The process intended to counter (institutionalized) racism and other forms of discrimination within the WCSG. The WCSG initiative built upon two projects conducted by employees of FNP and ENP in 2020. Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, both FNP and ENP members explored forms of discrimination experienced by students and staff in their respective chair groups. Based on a survey and workshop in 2020, a report produced by FNP members reveals discriminatory practices within the group and WUR broadly. Likewise, a survey disseminated in 2020 among staff, PhD students and post-docs at the ENP group indicated that several respondents recognized unconscious bias and prejudice within the research and education practices of the group, as well as in social interactions at the workplace.

To broaden and deepen our understanding of and work towards countering discriminatory practices, our team researched the challenges and opportunities to foster a diverse and inclusive WCSG. We started from the premise that notions of inclusivity can remain superficial when they do not address the specific power dynamics in groups. In such cases, related actions often fail to cultivate a sense of belonging for diverse societal groups, because structural reproductions of discrimination are overlooked (Ahmed 2012; Uda 2019). We also built on scholarly emphasis to develop definitions and practices that fundamentally acknowledge every person's dignity, freedom and need to belong (Ahmed 2012; Uda 2019), and methodologies to overcome racial and colonial inequalities in sustainability sciences (Liboiron 2021). Such recognition and inclusion of diverse values and knowledge practices is essential for just and effective sustainability governance (Pascual et al. 2021; Wyborn et al. 2020). Therefore, this incubator project sought to produce a shared, bottom-up understanding of what it means, in the context of WCSG, to foster genuinely inclusive research and teaching communities in sustainability governance, and ideally connect this to concrete (future) cluster-wide actions.

Practically, we conducted an explorative and action-oriented research project consisting of three main activities: we mapped samples of the chair groups' curricula, carried out a survey, and hosted a series of guided group discussions with lecturers and course coordinators. Our purpose was to research the challenges, best practices and future opportunities associated with a diverse and inclusive WCSG. Furthermore, we put into practice several exercises (see Appendix F and G) within our group to experiment with practices that can enhance inclusivity. Within this incubator project, we also actively sought connections with other initiatives within WUR (see Appendix H) to understand what was going on within and beyond WUR, to learn from other initiatives, and carve out how the incubator fits into wider initiatives and opportunities.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows. In Section 2 we briefly reflect on the positionality of our research team, to be specific about from where we have co-generated knowledge. Section 3 describes the activities undertaken and methods used. In Section 4 we detail the issues of discrimination we encountered as well as challenges to foster diversity and inclusion in sustainability governance research and teaching at WCSG. In the concluding section, we point out the importance of institutional recognition and support for diversity and inclusion. In the appendices we show the research methods, summaries of specific discussions that we had, a glossary of important definitions and a reflection on two exercises that we conducted within the team to practice our inclusive facilitation skills.

We feel encouraged by the growing number of colleagues who actively engage with tackling issues of discrimination. This report is intended to aid this process. We realize that researching and reading about discrimination in our own institutional context can be discomfoting, because it links to personal relations and responsibilities. We encountered such discomfort in multiple stages during our research process, including in the discussions within our project group. We would like to encourage all readers to accept the discomfort and to not let it discourage anyone from taking the results of this research process seriously. We experienced that keeping an open mind and accepting discomfort helped sympathize with those experiencing discrimination or unequal access to resources in diverse ways.

2. Positioning the research team

In this positionality statement, we intend to clarify the team members' world views, values and beliefs, and acknowledge how these have shaped the incubator research design, conduct and outputs (Darwin Holmes, 2020). While positionality statements are usually individual reflections of researchers' situatedness, we present a brief overview of the differences that exist within the team as relevant to designing and conducting the research and drafting this report. To do so, we position ourselves vis-a-vis the research subject, the research participants and the research context and process (Darin Holmes, 2020). The incubator research team consisted out of five staff members, three postdoctoral researchers, two PhD candidates and one student assistant (see Table 1). The group members work on diverse topics within the governance domain, including but not limited to themes relating to diversity, discrimination and marginalization—or put another way: on issues of participation, justice, accountability and (knowledge) democratization- within environmental governance.

Table 1. Project members of the incubator project.

| Chair Group | Staff | Postdoctoral Researchers | PhD Candidates | Student Assistant (WCSG) |
|-------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| FNP | Verina Ingram | Josie Chambers* | Marieke Meesters Tabitha Muriuki | Sascha Pimentel |
| ENP | Annet Pauwelussen Eira Carballo Cárdenas | | | |
| PAP | Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen | Sumit Vij* | | |
| LAW | Lucila De Almeida | Alessia d'Amico* | | |

(Note: *Three project members moved to other jobs during the project).

While there are legitimate objections and challenges to make identities explicit, we consider it important to list several intersecting identities within the group that have shaped the research. During the research projects, the following identity aspects were relevant in the research project: the group consisted predominantly of team members that identified as cis-women, one person used both the he/they pronoun, and none identified as white male. Most team members had experienced discrimination within or outside the university, which was part of the motivation for some to participate in this project. Being subject to discrimination can have sensitizing consequences for researchers because it informs the questions we ask, methods we select and the interpretations we make of others' experiences. In other words, it brings an insider perspective (Foote & Gau Bartell, 2011).

All researchers were embedded in the four chair groups of the WCSG and most taught or coordinated courses. Therefore, the researchers had an extra element of an insider's perspective to the research: having experienced discrimination themselves as well as being part of the researched group. The only exception was the student assistant, who was employed primarily for this project and not embedded within either chair group as a student. The researchers' insider position created situations in which the researchers shifted between the roles of researcher, facilitator, and research participant. Therefore, the research is partly autobiographical. On some occasions, the group members' position complicated deliberations about the issues at stake. In other (and most) cases, it deepened the team's understanding of the issues through extensive discussions during our meetings and with chair group colleagues. We believe that the diversity of the incubator group in terms of seniority, nationality and characters opened conversations within the project team and across chair groups that would not have taken place otherwise.

Even though we carefully developed our explorative pilot study process of exploring and mapping issues of diversity and exclusion – we struggled as both individuals and as a group to grapple the many sensitivities and tensions involved in locating, labelling and representing how and where structural discrimination and exclusion takes place. A critical reflection on our own process and methods of 'mapping' diversity laid bare the sensitivities inherent to researching and addressing diversity. The two intersecting approaches of mapping and categorizing people into races, ethnicities, genders (needed to show structural underrepresentation but that can also be perceived as harmful in its reduction and exclusion) and on the other hand the approach of reflecting on biases and finding ways to engage with difference - which risks obscuring the structural inequalities, biases and privileges that need to be tackled and dismantled for the system to change. We experienced first-hand that addressing these issues requires careful deliberation, and an environment that facilitates constructive and respectful debate, while we also recognized that discomfort and even conflict can be productive and is inherently part of questioning and addressing sensitive issues of racism/institutional whiteness, discrimination, privilege and colonial legacy.

The group members shared an ambition to engage in action-oriented research and to prioritize realizing change within the institution and lived reality, rather than a focus on solely producing a scientific report or publication. Therefore, the group engaged in activities that were action-oriented and intended to catalyse positive change, while stimulating and creating room for reflection and deliberation.

3. Project activities and research methods

This document reports on our findings from a brief review of literature, a survey (n= 35, conducted in October 2021 among staff, PhDs and master students); a curriculum mapping of eight courses from the four participating chair groups; four guided group conversations with lecturers and course coordinators from three WCSG chair groups (4-6 participants per focus group); and two exercises (Appendix F and G) within our incubator project research team.

The **survey** (Appendix C: Survey design) was disseminated among WCSG members to map experiences and understandings of discrimination, belonging, diversity, decolonization and intersectionality, as well as to gain insight into anti-discriminatory and anti-colonization efforts to increase diversity and inclusion. The **curriculum mapping** (Appendix B: Curriculum mapping) was conducted to identify current teaching material and practices, as well as possibilities for improvement. A framework was developed to map inclusivity and diversity in PAP, LAW, ENP and FNP courses in terms of the educational material and teaching staff. **Guided group discussions**, also referred to as education talks (Appendix D: Education Talks), were held with 11 people in October and November 2021, to exchange experiences and views about diversity and inclusion in education in WCSG. The **group discussions** (Appendix E: Structure of the 'Education Talks' Group Discussions) sought to reflect on the curriculum mapping exercise with the course coordinators and to collect best practices from lecturers and course coordinators that already take place. The insights related to research (section 4.2) are solely based on the survey. The **exercises** (Appendix F: Exercise 1 - Formulating inclusive intentions and

Appendix G: Exercise 2 - Preferred pronouns, important or irrelevant?) carried out within our research team were intended to experiment with tools or exercises to enhance our own inclusivity. The **literature** review was used to inform the glossary and to provide ideas for opportunities to address the issues used.

One of the drivers for this incubator project was to find common ground among the incubator team on definitions and terms used to understand issues about inclusion/exclusion, de/neo/anti-colonial, belonging and unsafety. We have provided a glossary (Appendix A: Glossary) that we formulated to better understand the different terms we used in this process. Rather than giving a final definition, the glossary is intended for readers to get (further) sensitized to the multiplicity of meanings and concepts used to give words to lived and embodied experiences of WCSG members and students.

4. Opportunities and challenges to foster diversity and inclusivity in sustainability governance

Below, we present the issues, opportunities and challenges that we identified as currently affecting processes of enhancing diversity and inclusivity at the WCSG. We differentiated between issues related to education and issues related to research and present them in separate sections (4.1 Education and 4.2 Research). We end each section with a list of practical best practices for consideration.

4.1. Education

Issues, opportunities and related challenges regarding diversity and inclusivity for education were clustered in three elements: i. the content of the material being taught (e.g., diversity in authorship of reading materials); ii. the people involved (diversity in lecturers and students), and iii. the pedagogy or process of education (e.g., teaching tools and teaching philosophy). Although these elements of diversity may not cover all possible understandings of diversity, our study indicated these elements as significant spheres where improvement could be made.

Content

We found two key issues regarding the content of the educational material (based on empirical examples from interviewees research, education talks, case studies provided in lectures and obligatory and recommended literature), which we identify as challenges to fostering diversity and inclusivity in the classroom. First, we found that much of the knowledge we provide focuses on the Global North or presents approaches from Global North with limited discussion of alternative worldviews and epistemic traditions. We also found little explicit attention for how diverse groups (gender, ethnic, class, indigenous) have different experiences of sustainability governance issues. Second, we found little attention for how sustainability governance affects different identities (e.g., in terms of gender, sexuality or race). Furthermore, authors of the mandatory literature were predominantly white European/North American and affiliated to European and American universities or research institutes. From the sampled courses and the reflections by lecturers in the education talks, we distilled that very few authors of mandatory literature were affiliated to universities from the global south or explicitly identified as Indigenous scholars. This implies how parts of our education implicitly or explicitly favours western based knowledge and renders this knowledge suitable for global application

These challenges can be countered by:

- Including a diversity of perspectives (e.g., from scholars from the Global South, of colour, who are other-abled and LGBTQI+ as well allowing for controversial perspectives);
- Facilitating critical reflection on how different methodological approaches create different kinds of knowledge;

“There is still a lot of room for improvement in diversity of the literature that students read. This depends on the scope of the course, but it would be good if students read authors from different ethnic, gender, epistemic, national backgrounds. I also realized this applies to some of my own courses.”

“All of the courses I have followed take a Western perspective of knowledge production. Very rarely we talk about the importance of including local knowledge and if we do, it's mostly local Dutch knowledge, but once we shift focus to an international case the perspective of the indigenous people is often disregarded. It also surprised me to see so many students doing their research in faraway African countries without involving local scientists/population.”

“One of the readings from a course used the n-word. Even though it was an old paper I believe we could either have removed the word or found a more recent paper discussing a similar issue.”

- Informing students that they are being educated in a specific “Western” perspective and helping them to critically reflect upon embedded notions of superiority;
- Discuss that the theoretical frameworks used in courses and the ‘big thinkers’ cited are situated in, and are a product of, particular paradigms, perspectives and/or geopolitical contexts, and therefore also partial;
- Introduce different/alternative theoretical frameworks and worldviews.

Some of these adjustments may be difficult to acknowledge and adopt. Appropriate (overview) literature by non-western scholars may not be available at first sight or may not be relevant for all courses (e.g., on EU law). Moreover, authors’ backgrounds and identities are not always clear and including specific authors at the expense of others can in fact reinforce discriminatory practices based on wrong assumptions. There is also a risk of tokenism when including authors of underrepresented backgrounds becomes a ‘ticking boxes’ exercise instead of a genuine engagement with difference to pluralize perspectives in course materials. Therefore, a thorough process, including research, is needed to come to new decisions about which literature, case studies and guest speakers to include. This process may be time-consuming, and therefore there needs to be financial and institutional support for this undertaking. In the education talks we learned there was considerable interest in a toolbox in the form of questions that help course coordinators to reflect on and improve the diversity and inclusiveness of their own course curriculum. Furthermore, the abovementioned adjustments to the curriculum may generate discomfort for students or the teacher, especially if course content is (mis)understood as the teacher’s own perspective. It is thus important that we develop ways to navigate this discomfort and show students the value of discussing different perspectives and investigating discomfort. One way to approach this is to include exercises in which students learn to think and approach issues from different perspectives, such as a simulation games in which students are actors with diverse backgrounds, which some courses already use.

Lecturer diversity

Whilst the ratios of lecturers teaching the sampled WCSG courses in terms of gender were not skewed (see appendix B), diversity was low in terms of lecturers being primarily white and European. During the survey, the lack of diversity of people in influential positions and the often more marginalized and precarious situation of others (e.g., those in temporary contracts, especially with an international background and women) was commented upon. These findings created significant discussions in the education talks as well as in discussion our curriculum mapping with WCSG colleagues. Some considered the lack of diversity as a direct issue for a diverse WCSG and underrepresentation of people of colour in lecturer positions was seen to create a lack of role models for students of colour. Others expressed discomfort with categorizing people by skin colour, religion, or ethnic background, referring to the risk of reinforcing and creating divisions between people – even if it is for positive discrimination. Categorization can overlook differences and diversity that is not easily visible, or less attended too, such as disability and socio-economic class. Furthermore, advocating for more diversity by categorization runs a risk of ‘ticking the box’ tokenism. Categorization can also be a strategy to avoid focusing on role models and voices in class. Still, acknowledging a lack of diversity based on categorizations can be a valuable tool to address the institutional whiteness of university spaces (including the WCSG cluster), and to point out structural underrepresentation of minority groups, and people of colour in particular.

These challenges can be countered by:

“Perhaps, WUR is well-meaning to be inclusive and diverse, but many departments are still very white, and while there are many women working now as PhDs, postdocs, UDs, one can clearly see how the top of chairs and UHDs is much more masculine. I think we need to be much more reflective of what these structures are that squeeze women, people of color, or disabled or neurodiverse people out on the way to the ‘top’.”

“A lot of the lecturers are still white and male (even though it has already improved), it would be nice to see more diversity there. I am sure the visible presence of more young, female teachers and researchers would inspire people.”

- Using categorization and diversity mapping explicitly as tool to confront and start the conversation about diversity and institutional whiteness, and advocate for change;
- Positive discrimination (e.g., pay extra attention to valuing someone from an underrepresented background to counter existing biases)
- Promoting the diversity of role models, for example, women or people of colour in leadership positions and as experts in class can result in more diverse representation and (academic) role models (Dean et al., 2009, Colfer et al., 2021, James et al., 2021).
- Recruitment *and* retention: e.g., widen eligibility criteria, make diversity a hiring and retention issue, find out why people leave (exit interviews) what our chair groups need to succeed and what they may not be getting, whether we are modelling good behaviour, structures for mentoring or supporting new staff members (Gill 2016).
- Make explicit and highlighting structural differences and inequalities at different WUR levels e.g., chair and science groups, and thereby stimulating discussion and reflection on what kind of differences are important to overcome, and how through more and frank discussions on this topic.

Students

Two key issues around diversity and inclusion for students were expressed during the guided group discussions. The first related to group dynamics among students in group work and classroom settings. (International) students indicated feeling excluded or discriminated against in group work. Leaving group formation up to students can be stressful for some, and risks reinforcing divisions between Dutch and international students. Careful attention to how groups are created and interventions (e.g., random allocation) are made, for what purposes and with what potential effects for student dynamics, can help overcome this. Secondly, students noted feeling unsafe or uncomfortable in some teaching settings. Stereotyping and discrimination against different national, cultural or gender identities was experienced by some students, teachers and PhDs who participated in the survey. Respondents commented that stereotyping occurs in student-student interaction, student-teacher interaction, both in the classroom and elsewhere on campus.

Strategies to overcome these challenges include:

- Distinguish between intellectual discomfort and personal or relational discomfort. Participants of the group discussions saw intellectual discomfort as an important aspect of university teaching, to provoke thoughts, pull students out of their comfort zones and to develop critical thinking. The line between intellectual and personal discomfort can be difficult to navigate for teachers, especially when course material concerns contested, sensitive or ethical topics;
- Pay attention to having a safe setting (see Appendix A glossary) to achieve productive intellectual discomfort, which can be aided by sharing personal things as a teacher, which can create an informal atmosphere;
- Making explicit that considering differences in approaches and truths is a worthwhile academic endeavour and can stimulate a safe and inclusive atmosphere.

“One of the issues I encountered recently is that a student gave an example of China as a negative example of a place with no care whatsoever for local communities. She expressed a stereotype to make a point and other students responded that this was offensive to Chinese students in class.”

“In a lecture, a picture of a Ugandan research assistant was used while the guest lecturer made a lot of accusations about how this assistant was always late and had stolen her money. The picture and his name were used and shared with a lot of students (I think around 80) without his consent and without giving him the ability to respond to these accusations. When a student from the class commented that he thought that this was unethical, he was met with resistance from the course coordinators.”

“Chinese students, especially during last academic year, where the COVID-19 pandemic was at its highest, were treated somehow with precaution by other (mostly European) students.”

“Africa is used as the bad example a lot of times [regarding development topics]. Students and teachers are not specific enough and use stereotypical terms.”

Pedagogy

The focus group discussions indicated that teachers and coordinators perceived and valued a high level of diversity in experiences, disciplinary and cultural backgrounds, and knowledge of students. This was considered as an important character of education within WCSG, and as essential for preparing students to work in diverse environments.

We identified four **opportunities** in our focus group discussions and survey responses for pedagogic strategies that can enhance a welcoming environment for all students, and help make our education more inclusive and diverse:

1. Academic skills are currently framed in a narrow, 'western' way: being present, taking initiative and critically reflect are generally valued in WCSG's education. This narrow framing risks overlooking other skills that are equally important to academic spaces, such as expressing emotions, listening, connecting with human beings and connecting with the environment. Hence, to make our education more inclusive, we can also think critically about **whether and how we value, stimulate and award various kinds of academic skills**. This also helps building skills that are essential to communicate with diverse groups of stakeholders in professions related to sustainability governance.
2. Inclusivity in teaching methods also means that we need to think about and develop our strategies to **give voice**: to gain insights from, and mobilize, students with backgrounds where it is not commonly appreciated nor stimulated to speak up in class, debate, or to express critical questions in response to lecturers.
3. Diversity in students includes their different academic levels and disciplinary backgrounds. To navigate these differences and accommodate different (types of) students, it is important to **get to know the students, engage in diverse teaching methods, and reflect together with students**. However, respondents indicated that it was increasingly challenging to engage with students because of increasing student numbers.
4. **Valuing, experimenting and practicing other-than-cognitive learning methods** such as embodied or land-based learning can widen the scope of ways of knowing. This alternative pedagogy would address neurodiversity among students and contribute to decolonize knowledge transfers (Simpson, 2002, 2004). For example, FNP has experimented with nature-based learning, which could be used by other groups.

"I attended a lecture where the Social Identity Map was explained. We had to discuss our own positions and I felt this created an uncomfortable situation where differences between students became extremely clear in just a 'short' breakout room session of 15 minutes."

"Teaching styles that emphasize the students' initiative/pro-activeness might not be inclusive for people from cultures where students are expected to follow directions. Although I understand it is probably part of WUR's culture to develop pro-active alumni, perhaps some considerations or cultural workshops could be set up so that every student feels comfortable sharing their opinion."

"When assisting in a course that required a lot of interaction and teamwork, I noticed that students from Asian backgrounds tend to be quiet since their culture doesn't emphasize taking initiative to talk. Conversely, European students usually stand up more because they are used to speak out. This gave the wrong idea that European students knew better/were more involved in the class than Asian students even when the content of what the students said might have been wrong."

Summary of best practices & opportunities

Survey respondents and literature suggested the following best practices (either implemented or required) to foster diversity and inclusion in the courses they taught or followed:

- Pay attention to **group diversity** when composing groups in class, while making students aware of the potential challenges, and advantages, of intercultural group work.
- Encourage students to **speak English** as much as possible in class.
- Make sure that students can **voice their opinion** and participate in class in different ways, so everyone's voice is heard.
- Encourage students to use examples and information from their **country contexts** relevant to the course in class and facilitate cross-boundary discussions between students with different backgrounds.
- Make use of **diverse and different case studies** in class and, if possible, ensure balance between Dutch and non-Dutch examples in course content.
- Pay attention to reflecting on **positionalities** of research discussed in class and the implications for how the research is conducted.
- Invite different **guest lecturers** to the course, paying attention to gender balance, age, diversity in cultural backgrounds and geographical locations of research.
- Enable ways to collect **feedback** from students with minority backgrounds on diversity and inclusion in WCSG education.
- Facilitate **ongoing, reflective discussions** between WCSG teachers about diversity in the curriculum.
- Make **intercultural training** a mandatory part of education.
- Add **learning goals** at the program level that deal with diversity and inclusion.
- Facilitate **training for teachers on bias in examination** and how to deal with everyday racism in class.
- Include diversity and inclusion as topic in **course evaluations**, so students can easily and frequently share their experiences.
- Talk openly about **struggles and successes**. Scholars from underrepresented backgrounds face unique challenges, but we all share academic rejection which can show people they are not alone.

4.2 Research

Survey respondents considered diversity and inclusion in sustainability governance research both as an end in itself, and as an imperative to deal with today's sustainability problems. Heterogeneity of perspectives and democratization (of sustainability knowledge and governance) were regarded as crucial to the advancement of the field. Main **challenges** to diverse research emerged in the survey responses: underrepresentation in citing scholars from the Global South and 'parachute science'.

Respondents recognized an **underrepresentation of (cited) Global South scholars in WCSG research outputs** because of interrelated structural barriers. Respondents gave multiple examples of how inequality between Global North and Global South scholarship manifests itself and is sustained (see survey quotes).

Respondents commented on extractive research practices and '**parachute science**' or '**safari science**' being common in sustainability governance research. The terms extractive research (Kouritzin and Nakagawa 2018) and parachute science refer to the extraction of data from places in the Global South for the development and betterment of Euro-American elite careers and institutes (Liboiron 2021; Tilley and Kalina 2021). Multiple examples of parachute science were given, related to the selection of research topics, questions, objectives, ethics and research collaborations. Respondents expressed that research topics are often not chosen based on local needs, that research ethics are tied to Euro-American institutes and that power imbalances exist in collaborations with local researchers. This can lead to the alienation and marginalization of those whose knowledge is extracted, as well as a failure for research to meaningfully contribute to change in those contexts.

"I think the only way forward to understand and tackle today's sustainability challenges is by opening up environmental governance to plural perspectives, knowledge systems and value systems. This is instrumental not only to enhance dialogues instead of resistance and misunderstanding in environmental contestations, but also to broaden the scope of possible and alternative solutions."

"Citation communities, the value given to status and elite institutes but also the hegemony of English and Western epistemic traditions in how science and knowledge are narrated are some of the structural discriminatory barriers to a more plural and diverse citation practice."

"There is structural underrepresentation of indigenous, black and otherwise minority scholarship in science, and sustainability governance is no exception."

"It is not common in our field to cite indigenous scholars or scholars of color. When I try to do justice to differentiated accessibilities in academia, I also experience difficulty in finding good articles (they do not pop up easily and you have to get acquainted with authors before finding the articles)."

"Informed consent is sometimes not enough, when it is a one-way process of informing without proper space for dialogue and discussion about research values and ethics with all people involved, particularly the most vulnerable ones."

"The implicit message is that "we" from a Western university know better, instead of asking whether these communities need or want this research at all."

"What is considered relevant enough to invest resources in research is seldom understood and studied from points of view underpinned by non-Westernized values."

"Topics are often selected based on the (academic) interests and needs of the MSc students or (PhD) researchers, without considering the needs of grassroots initiatives, nor is there much encouragement or incentive to take the needs on the ground more serious."

"Although there is increasing recognition for the need to include indigenous peoples and minority groups in the research practices and projects of sustainability governance research, I think this is still too often a matter of ad hoc participation, and not genuine co-production and co-design of objectives and methodologies of research (indigenous people and minorities)."

"Research funding usually is Western based, meaning that research is linked to a Western institutional home, including its rules and procedures."

Summary of best practices & opportunities

Drawing on proposals by survey respondents and literature, best practices and opportunities to foster diversity and inclusion in research, can focus on:

Active engagement

People management and HR policy:

- Model exemplary inclusive behaviour, so our own actions contribute to a positive climate for underrepresented students or staff (e.g., volunteering do work like that's historically considered as gendered work) (Gill 2016);

In our research designs

- Put effort into getting acquainted with marginalized research approaches;

In our citing practices

- Set diversity targets for citations from scholars with different backgrounds (e.g., 50%);
- Actively include perspectives from developing countries and revise the core perceptions of sustainability and governance;

In recruitment practices

- Actively look for people to fill positions from areas that less easily hear about the vacancy as they are not always part of influential networks;

In WUR and Science school funding and acknowledgment.

- Support diverse work and ideas with both voice (publicity and acknowledgement, award nomination) and budgets (Gill 2016);

Reflexivity

- Reflect on the purpose of the research, prior to and ongoing throughout the research process;

Embedding the knowledge produced through research

- Get to know research participants, their problems and worldviews;
- Put effort into mentoring and being mentored by people from diverse backgrounds;
- Develop and monitor non-extractive research ethical guidance and incentivize such research collaborations with local partners;
- Counter parachute science by “finding academic collaborators” through academic work or host government funding bodies, “developing a joint research agenda”, “engage with the next generation of researchers”, “share academic literature”, “know the

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“Think twice about why am I doing this research, who benefits and how I present myself. I have reached a point where I even think: if this does not benefit the researched community, I won't do this research.”

“Being more reflexive as researchers and honest to ourselves: Why do we do this research? Because it's a 'hot topic'? Because we believe it will contribute to improving something? Not wasting taxpayers' money on prestige projects that do not benefit those who need it the most. Sometimes I feel that we're in a rat race and researchers lose sight of what's really important and focus on 'scoring'.”

“We could conduct pre-studies, be reflective and organize non-Western reflection panels to scrutinize biases.”

“I aim to take time to build trust with research participants and get to know their worlds and perspectives and try as best as I can to take care to keep their knowledge and experience embedded in those worlds when translating insights into reports or publications. I see that as a major contribution of ethnography for sustainability governance.”

“In general, more effort can be put in mentoring and incentivizing working in one own's context or enhancing collaborations.”

“While collaboration with international partners (from the 'Global South') is stimulated, there is room for more structural co-productive approaches in sustainability governance research and undoing the explicit and implicit hierarchies of status and whose knowledge counts in the design and execution of collaborative research projects.”

regulatory landscape”, “be transparent in publishing.” (Stefanoudis et al. 2021, p. R185.);

Cross-boundary collaboration

- Identify hierarchies in collaborations especially with international partners (e.g., in funding, resources, as well as research design and execution etc) and actively work towards a distribution of tasks where stronger shoulders carry more weight;
- Seek enduring collaboration with students and researchers from the country we do research in;
- Foster, cherish and value long-term collaborations;

Inclusive actions in research projects

- Make proposal and project teams, seminars, committees, and conferences diverse balanced and diverse — and don't be afraid to ask for help if you need suggestions for speakers, decline to participate on non-diverse panels, and let organizers know why you're turning them down (Gill 2016).

5. Conclusion

Three main conclusions from this incubator project are that 1) challenges regarding diversity and inclusion exist within WCSG's education and research practices, but that 2) many staff members and PhDs are already addressing these issues in various ways. Importantly, 3) diversity and inclusion mean different things to different people, therefore, we found that various 'problem definitions' result in not only emphasis being placed on various aspects of the problem, but also on divergent perspectives on what appropriate or best solutions are.

Although we felt we had a carefully developed and thoughtful process of 'mapping' diversity and inclusion we struggled as individuals and as a group to grapple the many sensitivities and tensions inherent in doing diversity work. This implies that addressing the issue needs **careful deliberation over time, while also acknowledging the inevitability and productivity of** discomfort in the process of addressing and overcoming institutionalized forms of discrimination and extractive research practices. Best practices and examples (iterated in section 4) of how inclusion and diversification can be furthered exist, which can aid the process which we have found is much needed. During this incubator project, we realized that we were not equipped to facilitate group discussions about direct experiences of discrimination and belonging, due to our lack of expertise and our embeddedness in the different chair groups. We realized that diversity, racism and discrimination are sensitive topics that cause discomfort and sometimes resistance. Group discussions require **strong facilitation** to create safe spaces where people with different backgrounds and experiences with the topic can share their experiences. While DARE hosted several such sessions at the time of writing this report, we consider it particularly valuable to do this on a chair group, WCSG and program level. Based on our findings, we recommend initiating a process within each chair group that can go beyond scratching the surface of feelings of discomfort that are part of discriminatory structures. Such a process needs to be facilitated by external professionals.

Even though these efforts at the individual level are crucial and welcome, **structural biases need to be tackled at different institutional levels**. What became clear during our research for this bottom-up incubator project was that institutional recognition and support are of paramount importance to enable change. Grassroots initiatives like this incubator provide a different perspective to how to achieve change, especially when running in parallel to institution-wide processes like DARE and the diversity officers. Initiatives at chair group and Centre-level can take an insider perspective and utilize in-depth knowledge of material and research practices. To enable implementation of these best practices and to enhance research into what is needed *in situ*, there is a need for recognition of problems and workable solutions, and commitment of time and (financial) resources.

Institutional support is needed for supervisors (of students and PhD's), program, chair group, human resources departments and WUR level. We call particularly on our **chair holders** as key leaders in our institution to challenge practices of inequality and discrimination and to foster a more inclusive university. WUR-broad top-down support is also needed due to the time-pressure academics experience and our competitive system². Competition-driven

² Also confirmed in the Academic year 2021-2022 survey

citational practices reinforce existing hierarchies. Learning about different practices takes time. Not resorting to parachute science business-as-usual but building a research community with the people involved in the study, takes time. Engaging in inclusive and de- or anti-colonial forms of research production, e.g., in genuine co-design, also takes time and resources. We want to underscore that the institutional and moral support is most needed from those in powerful positions and from privileged circumstances to challenge practices of inequality and discrimination and to foster a more inclusive university.

We conclude by suggesting a practical opportunity for integrating many of the recommendations and insights: setting up a cluster-wide postdoc project. A postdoc would be particularly suited to embed processes that work towards inclusivity on a cluster and chair group level. Part of this project could be to reflect on the appropriateness of methods used when researching on diversity and inclusion. Another aspect of the post-doc project could be to develop an extensive citation 'cheat-sheet' that maps opportunities in the literature which enable citational diversity. Researchers could then benefit from easily accessible, alternative references from the Global South, people of colour and women that can replace, supplement or reflect on the Western canon that predominates in our research and education. Creating a new reference list costs time, and a post-doc would be particularly suited to carry out this work and enhance the diversity in representation in the cited works, along with a deeper analysis of underlying assumptions of the various theoretical and methodological approaches compiled, and compared, in such a reference list.

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Appendix A: Glossary

This glossary of meanings has been converged from conceptual definitions contained in literature, our understandings within the incubator team and from the WCSG colleagues we discussed with, interrogated, puzzled about and agreed and disagreed on during group discussions.

Anticolonial

Indigenous critique (Liboiron 2021; Daza and Tuck 2014, Tuck & Yang 2014) to the use of the term decolonial and resulted in a suggested alternative of the term anticolonial. Following indigenous critiques of how decolonization is often used as a metaphor, the term anticolonial has been coined e.g., 'help develop anticolonial approaches in our education' (see Liboiron 2021).

Black Feminism

"Black feminism puts a focus on identity, considers the importance of context, social structures and intersecting oppressions. Black feminism also recognizes the *importance in experience* and tends not to make generalizing assumptions (Collins, 2002; Carby 2007). This school of thought acknowledges the multidimensionality to the experience of Black women and the multiple forms of oppressions they face (Crenshaw, 2018)." What distinguishes Black feminism from other schools of thought, is that the oppression of race is not seen as an autonomous process, but one that is interconnected with class, gender, race, religion and more (Carby, 2007). Racism then is a system of oppression based on the constructed realities of race, intersecting with gender, class and more identity characteristics that do not fit into the hegemonic norm (Griffin, 2012).

Comfort

"the effect of bodies being able to 'sink' into spaces that have already taken their shape". (Ahmed, 2004, p. 161)

Discomfort

"the effect of bodies inhabiting spaces that do not take or 'extend' their shape" The discomfort of coming face to face with our own involvement in harm, is by no means unproductive: it is not—or should not be—needless, gratuitous suffering, nor should it be fetishized as such. (Ahmed, 2004, p. 161):

Diversity

Meanings of diversity derived from literature as well as from WCSG members emphasize two components, namely the *acknowledgement* as well as the *inclusion* of people from different countries of origin, with different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, religions, genders, skin colours, (dis-)abilities, sexualities, ages, neurotypicalities, skills, disciplines as well as their different knowledges, feelings, points of view and expertises. A diverse academic environment necessitates the welcoming of and accounting for a variety of human beings, perspectives, in an effort to broaden academic traditions and dominant canons centred on European and US scholarship. Diversity in academia entails not just the co-existence, but foremost the celebration of difference, deeming it vital to forward collective academic ambitions. According to Ahmed (2012), diversity is best shared as a question that we should repeatedly ask ourselves, to prevent it from becoming institutionalized as a box to be ticked, which would result in the "loss of its critical edge (Ahmed, 2012, p. 1)." Diversity as an ongoing process entails a constant puzzling to explore whether different viewpoints can equally participate and are equally amplified.

This term has also been critiqued for being an empty container: "if diversity can mean anything, then practitioners can define it in ways that enable them to do the work they want to do. (...) If variety can be conjured by diversity, then it challenges a world that refuses variety, a world that considers issues only from a singular viewpoint (Ahmed, 2012, p. 79)."

Decoloniality

Just like diversity, decolonization starts with *acknowledgement*. This entails our recognizing that today's structural power asymmetries, inequalities, racism and discrimination are rooted in a history of colonial oppression.

Decolonization in academia specifically necessitates that we acknowledge the university as a colonial institution that plays a central role in the reproduction of structural asymmetries in knowledge production. The second component of

decolonization deals with the undoing, deconstructing or dismantling this colonial heritage and going against the reproduction of knowledge and power, through efforts to pluralize knowledges as well as explicitly locating and positioning these to reveal their geopolitics. Countering colonizing tendencies urges us to make space for softer, or less dominant approaches. Decoloniality is a perspective that allows us to see how the dynamics of power differences, social exclusion and discrimination (along the axes of race, gender and geographical and economic inequality) are connected to the ongoing legacy of our colonial history. A decolonized university has open forms of expertise and is open to intercultural and plural approaches to knowledge. See also anticoloniality.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality was coined by Black feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 as analytical lens to study inequalities, racism and discrimination. Intersectionality entails that identities are always multidimensional and the intersection of (ascribed) identity categories results in different types of privilege and disadvantage that people experience within society. Structures of categorization, such as race, gender, class, religion and sexuality - to name but a few important ones - do not function independent from each other, but interfere as they inform individual trajectories, experiences and perspectives as well as construct our identities, power and privilege. Thus, we cannot understand racism along a single axis, but this always has a gendered, classed or other identity dimension (Carastathis, 2014).

Everyday Racism

“the integration of racism into everyday situations through practices (cognitive and behavioural) that activate underlying power relations”. These are specific practices that are experienced as discriminating by an individual, whether it be intentional or unintentional.

“a process in which (a) socialized racist notions are integrated into meanings that make practices immediately definable and manageable, (b) practices with racist implications become in themselves familiar and repetitive, and (c) underlying racial and ethnic relations are actualized and reinforced through these routine or familiar practices in everyday situations” (Essed, 1991, p. 52-53).

Privilege

Defined in relational terms and in reference to social groups, and involves unearned benefits afforded to powerful social groups within systems of oppression (Uluğ, & Tropp 2021).

Safe Space

Safe spaces are places created for marginalized individuals to meet and express their experiences with marginalization. They have been described as exclusionary practices with “the overall purpose aims for a more inclusionary, just society.” (Collins, 2000: 110). “The perennial difficulty of safe(r) spaces means they are often far from comfortable... we can say that they are frequently discomfoting for those whose comfort is habitual (Ahmed, 2004, p. 161).”

- Safe(r) spaces: in attempting to generate a comfortable space against the (racialized, gendered, classed, queer, ableist) discomfort of everyday life can denaturalize comfort-as-norm.
- By organizing space around marginalized subjects and their needs, the habitually comfortable body may no longer "sink in" so easily. In providing (relative) comfort for the politically discomfoted, safe(r) spaces can also serve to discomfot the politically comfortable.

Appendix B: Curriculum mapping

Methodology

For the curriculum mapping exercise, two courses per chair group (PAP, ENP, LAW and FNP) were sampled. Courses were sampled based on the below criteria:

- The course covers the topic *sustainability governance*
- The sample contains one MSc and one BSc course per chair group
- The courses are mandatory for a BSc or MSc programme
- The course has a high number of students
- The course's topics cover global issues

Prior to the mapping exercise, the course coordinator was asked for consent for the review of their course and access to the course's Brightspace page. The mapping exercise involved a review of the course's syllabi, the mandatory literature and the lecture PowerPoints based on three qualitative research questions. These research questions were informed by concepts *diversity*, *decoloniality*, *positionality* and *intersectionality*.

1. *Diversity*: Whose stories are told through the course content and who tells these stories?

This research question aimed to understand what local or global topics authors of mandatory literature or lecturers spoke on in relation to some of their identity backgrounds. We researched whether inequality exists in the representation of authors and lecturers with different identity backgrounds. We considered the following identity aspects for this research question:

- Gender
- Nationality
- Affiliation
- Ethnicity
- Indigenous/non-indigenous

Further, we looked at the subject matters that they discussed and whether these are local or global phenomena. In a below section, we reflect on the limitations of this approach.

2. *Decoloniality/Positionality*: How are different perspectives on and approaches to the course's subject matters represented and positioned?

For this research question, we looked for practices of positionality in the course's content. Practices of positionality reveal the geopolitical location of knowledge (Wekker et al., 2019). When perspectives or approaches to the course subject matter are taught in a situated way, it allows students to recognize the geopolitical location of the information that they are exposed to. When perspectives or approaches to the course subject matter are not taught in a situated way, students may recognize this as universal or abstract knowledge (Wekker et al., 2019). An example of a positionality practice is giving background information on the school of thought which a perspective stems from, its geographical location(s) or a biography of the author of the perspective.

3. *Intersectionality*: Does the course content reflect different experiences of the course's subject matter based on intersecting identity positionings?

This final research question aimed to find out whether the analytical lens intersectionality, which is central to gender and critical race studies, is also applied in sustainability governance education, or it does not travel beyond these disciplines. We aimed to assess whether different experiences of subjects like climate change by different individuals and groups were made explicit throughout the course content.

Below, we present the aggregated results of the mapping exercise based on the mandatory literature and course syllabus/study guide.

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Male | 97 | 58,4% |
| Female | 69 | 41,6% |

| Nationality | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Europe | 103 | 62,0% |
| North America | 38 | 22,9% |
| South America | 3 | 1,8% |
| Oceania | 9 | 5,4% |
| Asia | 7 | 4,2% |
| Middle East | 2 | 1,2% |
| Africa | 0 | 0,0% |
| Unidentified | 4 | 2,4% |

| Affiliation | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Europe | 108 | 65,0% |
| North America | 34 | 20,5% |
| South America | 2 | 1,2% |
| Oceania | 14 | 8,4% |
| Asia | 4 | 2,4% |
| Middle east | 2 | 1,2% |
| Africa | 0 | 0,0% |
| Unidentified | 2 | 1,2% |

| Ethnicity | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| White | 148 | 89,1% |
| West-central Asian | 0 | 0,0% |

| | | |
|------------------|----|------|
| South-east Asian | 10 | 6,0% |
| Latin American | 3 | 1,8% |
| Arab | 1 | 0,6% |
| Jewish Israeli | 1 | 0,6% |
| Black American | 2 | 1,2% |
| Black African | 0 | 0,0% |
| Unidentified | 1 | 0,6% |

| Indigenous | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Indigenous | 0 | 0,0% |
| Non-Indigenous | 166 | 100,0% |

2. Diversity of lecturers teaching in selected courses:

| Gender | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Male | 16 | 39,0% |
| Female | 25 | 61,0% |

| Nationality | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Europe | 30 | 73,2% |
| North America | 3 | 7,3% |
| South America | 3 | 7,3% |
| Oceania | 0 | 0,0% |
| Asia | 3 | 7,3% |
| Middle east | 0 | 0,0% |
| Africa | 2 | 4,9% |

| Affiliation | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| WUR | 35 | 85,4% |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-------|
| Non-WUR (European or American) | 5 | 12,2% |
| Non-WUR (other) | 1 | 2,4% |

| Ethnicity | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| White | 34 | 83,0% |
| West-Central Asian | 0 | 0,0% |
| South-East Asian | 3 | 7,3% |
| Latin American | 2 | 4,9% |
| Arab | 0 | 0,0% |
| Jewish Israeli | 0 | 0,0% |
| Black American | 0 | 0,0% |
| Black African | 2 | 4,9% |
| Unidentified | 0 | 0,0% |

| Indigenous | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Indigenous | 0 | 0,0% |
| Non-Indigenous | 41 | 100,0% |

Appendix C: Survey design

Methodology

The goal of the survey is to gain insights into experiences of racism and discrimination in research and teaching about sustainability governance at WCSG, best practices for diversity and inclusion, feelings of belonging of different students, teachers and researchers as well as understandings of diversity, decolonization and intersectionality at the WCSG.

1) General questions

| | |
|-----------|---|
| I am a... | <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher/teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> PhD candidate |
| My age is | <input type="checkbox"/> Between 17-25 <input type="checkbox"/> Between 25-35 <input type="checkbox"/> Between 35-45 <input type="checkbox"/> Between 45-55 <input type="checkbox"/> Above 65 |

2) Teaching about sustainability governance *only teachers*

| | |
|---|---|
| What forms of racism and discrimination have you encountered (directed at you or someone else) in teaching about <i>sustainability governance</i> ? | <input type="checkbox"/> In class: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Student-teacher interaction: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Student-student interaction: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Other, namely: ... |
| Are diversity and inclusion relevant in your teaching about <i>sustainability governance</i> ? How? | Open question |
| When you think about the courses you teach/coordinate, what goes well related to diversity and inclusion? | Open question |
| How do you ensure this? | Open question |
| Where is room for improvement in teaching about <i>sustainability governance</i> ? | Open question |
| What support is needed for improvement? | Open question |

3) Learning about sustainability governance *only students*

| | |
|--|---|
| What forms of discrimination have you encountered (directed at you or someone else) in your education about <i>sustainability governance</i> ? | <input type="checkbox"/> In class: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Student-teacher interaction: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Student-student interaction: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Other, namely: ... |
| Thinking about diversity and inclusion, what goes well in the courses you take? | Open question |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| What aspects of the courses need improvement? | Open question |
|---|---------------|

4) Researching sustainability governance *only researchers*

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>What forms of racism and discrimination do you see taking place in researching <i>sustainability governance</i>?</p> <p>(<i>Sustainability governance</i> refers to the formal as well as informal interactions and institutions that steer sustainability practices in networks of diverse public and private actors)</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Selection of research topics: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Research objectives/methods: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Research ethics: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Research collaborations: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Publications: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Citations: ... <input type="checkbox"/> Other, namely: ... |
| Are diversity and inclusion relevant in your research about <i>sustainability governance</i> ? How? | Open question |
| What do you do to counter racism and discrimination in your research? | Open question |
| Where is room for improvement in researching <i>sustainability governance</i> ? | Open question |
| What support is needed for improvement? | Open question |

5) Belonging at WCSG

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Things that I find relevant for describing my identity: | Open question |
| Could you give an example of a moment that you experienced or observed racism, discrimination and/or exclusion at WCSG/WUR? | Open question |
| What makes you and/or others feel unwelcome within WUR settings? Why? | Open question |
| Could you give an example of a moment that you experienced inclusivity at WUR? | Open question |
| Can you think of anything that helps you (or would help you) and/or others to feel welcome/safe? | Open question |

6) Understandings of diversity, decolonization, intersectionality

| | |
|--|---------------|
| <p>Lastly, we would like to learn from the ideas of students and researchers about the below concepts.</p> <p>So, from your <i>own</i> understanding (not Google's), what does...</p> <p>Diversity mean?</p> | Open question |
| Decolonization mean? | Open question |
| Intersectionality mean? | Open question |

Outputs of survey:

- data on experiences of racism, discrimination, exclusion in WSCG research and education.
- data on best practices for diversity and inclusion at WSCG.
- data on individual feelings of belonging at WSCG.
- data on understanding of diversity, decolonization and intersectionality at WSCG.

The survey was sent to all WSCG members and students in the period October 2021 and 35 responses were received.

Appendix D: Education Talks (methodology)

In October and November 2021, the education team of the Incubator organized **4 education lunch meetings** (1 hour each) to discuss diversity, inclusion and anti-racism in education in the WCSG. For every meeting we invited 4 participants for a semi-structured discussion, on the following questions/issues:

1. Scoping the need for diversity/inclusivity: what do we mean with these terms? Where in our education do we need to focus on and make improvements?
2. Discuss and reflect on the curriculum mapping exercise conducted by this incubator team: Is it helpful? For what purpose? Could it also be harmful? What could be improved in how we can assess our education in terms of diversity and inclusivity?
3. What questions do we need to ask to find out about and enhance the inclusiveness and diversity of SCSG education?

Participant sampling:

1. We used a convenience sampling strategy: we sent open invites to all WCSG cluster staff involved in teaching (chairs, postdocs and lecturers/tenure track staff) and see who signs up.
2. We also used a purposeful sampling strategy: we invited selected people (identified incubator members from specific chair groups) because they showed an interest and/or because we reviewed their courses.
3. We composed the 4 groups by convenience based on availability through the first invite, and also purposefully with the second round of invites.

Due to some cancellations, we ended up with 11 people participating in 4 lunch meetings, facilitated by 2 or 3 people from the incubator team; one to guide the discussion, and another taking notes. A mix of staff responded to our invitation to attend the education talks: Lecturers, tenure track staff, one chairholder, a postdoc researcher and an education coordinator. The majority identified as Dutch, some with a mix of international backgrounds. All participants except one were female. Most participants were from ENP, a few from FNP, and no participants from PAP or LAW.

Participants' motivations:

Each session started with a round of introductions, during which we asked participants to reflect on their motivation to join the lunch talks and discuss diversity and inclusiveness in WCSG education. A synthesis of the responses shows a general curiosity in the debate, and an interest to learn about and engage in a topic that the participants note is already increasingly being discussed and experienced among colleagues and students. A general motivation among participants was to *reflect on where we stand* in the WCSG in terms of diversity in our education, what goes well and where do we need to give more attention. Some also expressed more specifically a felt urge to know *how to translate the debate better and more practically into our pedagogy*, individually, at chair group level, and as the level of the WCSG. For example, one participant expressed how she struggles with finding the right way to address and improve inclusivity and diversity in her courses, as it's such a complex, broad, and sensitive issue. Where to start, and how? Where to focus? At the same time, participants were also interested in discussing the tension between finding solutions and 'quick fixes', versus opening up a wider debate to tackle more structural discriminatory issues in education. Where and how can we make relatively easy and constructive interventions, and what issues require a deeper reflection and dialogue?

Other discussions:

Besides the education lunch talks, members of the Incubator team also conducted a series of **discussions and exchanges** with diverse groups and people in WUR to gain insight into inclusion and diversity practices and opportunities in education. These talks included ARA, ESG Human Resources, with the Gender SMART team, with Forest and Nature Conservation BSc and MSC Education Director and team about inclusion and diversity practices and opportunities within WUR.

Appendix E: Structure of the 'Education Talks' Group Discussions

The following structure was prepared and used in all four meetings.

Introductions

- Who is who:
 - What role in education?
 - Motivation to participate.
- Introduce the education part of the incubator and its purpose:
 - Aim is to get a sense of the state of diversity, inclusivity and potential unconscious biases and discrimination in the curriculum of the cluster, and what that means.
 - To also critically reflect on methodologies to map this.
 - Find ways to best support course coordinators to enhance inclusivity and diversity in their courses in a way that works for them.
- Organization:
 - Point out to participants the timing/structure of this talk
 - Anonymity & informed consent: We will use insights for our reporting and toolkit, but make sure nothing that is shared in the meeting is linked to persons unless they want this themselves.
 - Ask participants to also not disclose personal opinions of others beyond the meeting.
 - Have a pen and paper with you

Part 1. Open discussion about needs for inclusivity/diversity

- How do participants reflect on the diversity and inclusiveness of the courses in the cluster? Do they see a need to be more inclusive and diverse, and if so how, where, in what aspects?
 - What do we mean with inclusivity/diversity?
 - Where in the/your course could/should improvements be made?

Part 2. Reflection on the curriculum mapping exercise

- Give a brief explanation of what we have done with this mapping, and what were the main results.
- Invite participants to reflect and respond:
 - Response to the content of what the pilot shows, the 'results.
 - Response/reflection/critique to the methodology used.
Is it helpful? Could it be a tool to make us stop, see, and reflect?
 - If discomfort is mentioned: what is this discomfort? And can we do something constructive with it?
 - We may steer towards: what then?

Part 3. Drafting question for reflection

- What questions would you ask each other and yourself to find out about and enhancing the inclusiveness and diversity of a course?
- Invite participants to share examples of what questions they (would like to) reflect on when reviewing their own courses/teaching practices.
- Invite participants to share how they have made actual changes in their courses/teaching practices.

Wrap up

Appendix F: Exercise 1 - Formulating inclusive intentions

One aspect of this incubator was to experiment with a number of exercises that could benefit inclusivity in working groups. In our fourth meeting, we formulated intentions for how we wanted to interact with each other. Initially, this exercise was about establishing ground rules. This sparked a discussion about the terminology: the term *ground rules* evoked an image of top-down enforced, unnegotiable rules. Therefore, we discussed the underlying goal of establishing ground rules, and decided to name the agreements 'intentions'. Below is a list of the intentions that we commonly established.

| Value | Action/intention |
|--|--|
| Room for disagreement/disagreement is encouraged | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen & respect to a statement that deviates from your own understandings - Show dissent without judging the individual - We value and respond respectfully to all contributions even when we do not agree with the content. - Process emphasizes puzzling, not powering - Report differing views and (in)decisions in minutes of meeting |
| An open attitude to learn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be open to revisit your own concepts on discrimination and inclusion |
| Safe for everyone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressing your feelings is normal and welcome - Focus on building a space together in language (not us vs them) - Mention preferred pronouns when first meeting someone - Question the biases that underlie statements with 'why'-questions |
| Equal communication opportunities during/outside of meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rotating turns in facilitation and notetaker - If you know you tend to take more space, try to step down. If you know you are shy, try to step up. - Use hand signals to establish a queue and streamline conversations - Facilitator asks round to ensure everyone has a say - Minutes are shared and can be responded to after the meeting |
| Credit where credit's due | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - credit ideas and 'unseen labour' in discussions - Sharing the workload evenly across the group to make sure no one is overburdened |

One of the communicative devices that we worked with, were hand signs. The hand sign we all knew was to raise a hand when one wanted to contribute to a discussion. We expanded our repertoire of hand signs to signify when one wanted to speak, a queue of those wanting to speak, to streamline discussions (direct replies or raising a new topic), to show (dis)agreement without making a sound, and to be able to intervene for a technical or clarification issue. See below for the hand signs that we used.

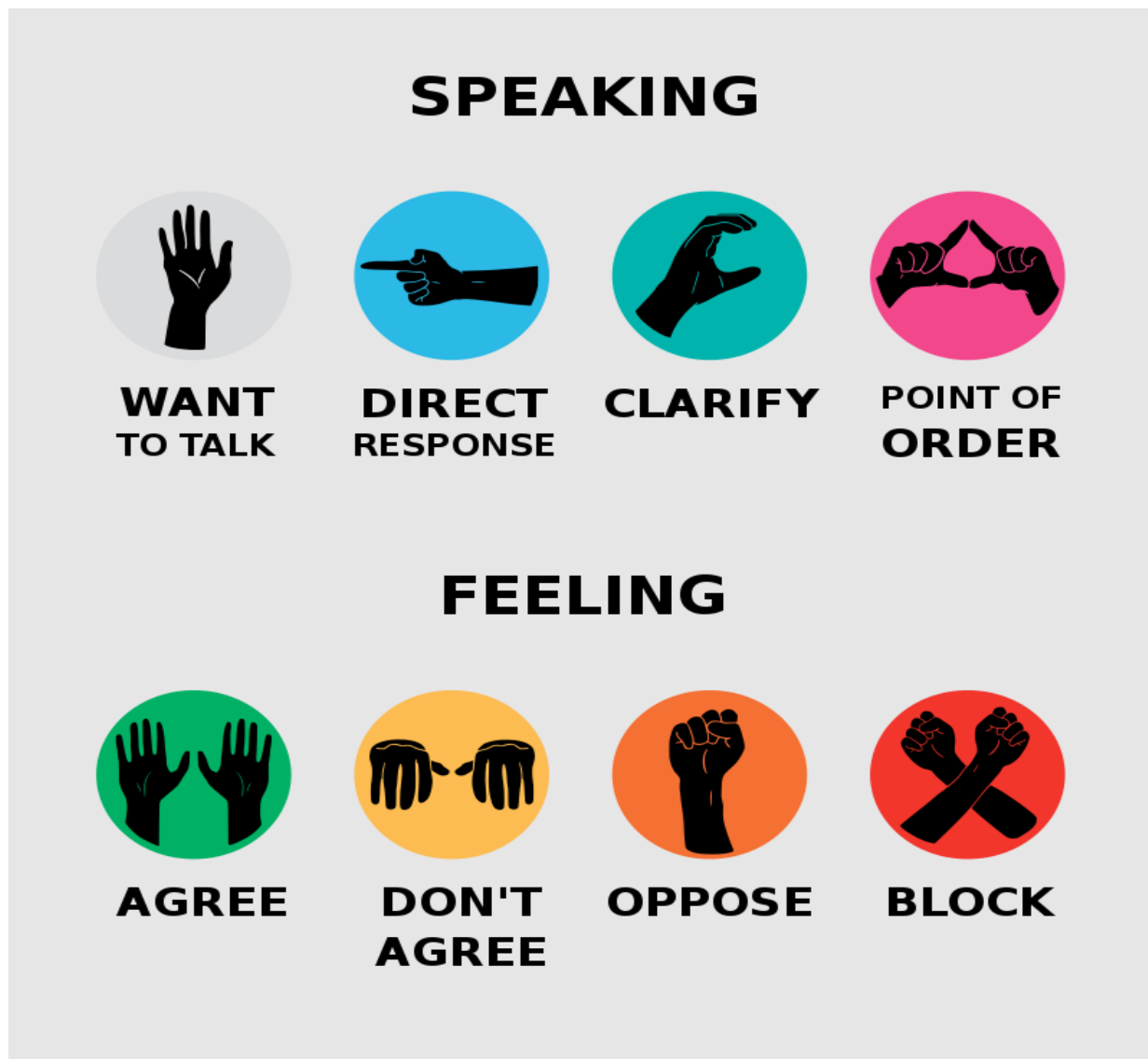


Figure 1. We use these hand signals to make communication in larger groups more streamlined and equal. Instead of raising a hand, we raised a finger. The second one in the queue raises two fingers, etc.

Appendix G: Exercise 2 - Preferred pronouns, important or irrelevant?

In meeting five, we practiced with creating an opportunity to share pronouns in a group setting. Pronouns are words that replace names, such as she/her, they/them and he/his, which usually indicate somebody's gender. We often assume that we know someone's gender and corresponding pronoun just by looking at them or reading their names, but there are many situations in which this is not as straightforward. Introducing one's pronouns can generate a more inclusive and affirming space, particularly for trans or non-binary people or people whose gender is often misread.

During the meeting, one of the team members introduced the potential benefits of using pronouns, which sparked a conversation about the usefulness of using pronouns. Our main take-aways from these discussions were that:

1. One group member expressed their worry that using pronouns can risk de-politicising gender issues. There is a concern that, especially in contexts with large inequalities between men and women, it can be risky to complicate the gender binary because it may water down emancipatory processes for women. In these situations, this focus on pronouns can be a largely semantic exercise, and ineffective for realizing change for people identifying as non-men. Transactivists and scholars have responded to similar concerns by stating that we will not have equality until those most marginalized among us have equality.
2. In our own institutional context, the use of pronouns did seem relevant and team members considered it an easy tool to enhance inclusivity in classroom settings and (chair)group meetings.

Appendix H: Contact persons in WUR diversity initiatives

Wageningen DARE Project

Percy Cilia Jr and Joyce van der Velde are the project leaders of DARE.

Sascha Pimentel is a member of the coordinating team of DARE and has the lead in the Education and Research pillar of DARE

DARE facilitates a Chair Group Network meeting as part of the Research and Education pillar. The working group meeting is usually held on Friday once a month and currently consists of 3 members. For more information, contact Sascha Pimentel.

WUR Gender-SMART EU-Horizon 2020- project

Coordinator in WUR: Margreet van den Burg