

Implementing the SDG in Canadian francophone academia

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INTRODUCTION

Who we are?

A consortium of Québec research organizations and universities (Institut Hydro-Québec en environnement, développement et société (Institut EDS) from Université Laval, Centre interdisciplinaire de recherche en opérationnalisation du développement durable (CIRODD), Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC) and Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO) that put together in late May 2019 a conference at ACFAS titled “[The Sustainable Development Goals: an opportunity to engage dialogue between science and society?](#)”.

ACFAS (Association francophone pour le savoir) is the most important multidisciplinary, interuniversity and intersectoral science event in the Francophone world. Established in 1923, its mission is to promote research and innovation as well as scientific culture in the French-speaking world by contributing to knowledge dissemination and to the scientific approach, with a vision of improving society's quality of life.

INTRODUCTION

Our main questions

1. What type of governance should be considered in order to assure SDGs are being accounted for in a meaningful and measurable way?
2. How is it possible for each actor, especially for universities, to contribute to the global sustainability efforts and synergistic linkages between the SDGs?

Our perspective

Transdisciplinary perspective, linking SDGs . We seek to mobilize coordinated efforts of a variety of actors from different disciplines and sectors.

Our goal

A new structural research design throughout the promotion of a “new academic culture” based on sound relationship between stakeholders and scientists (Sun et al., 2016).

INTRODUCTION

The conference tackled three major areas of SDG academic implementation over one and a half days:

Workshop 1 (W#1) SDGs and research: Sharing the experiences of Québec, Canada and elsewhere in order to reflect on the opportunities offered by the SDGs to develop inter, multi and transdisciplinary research.

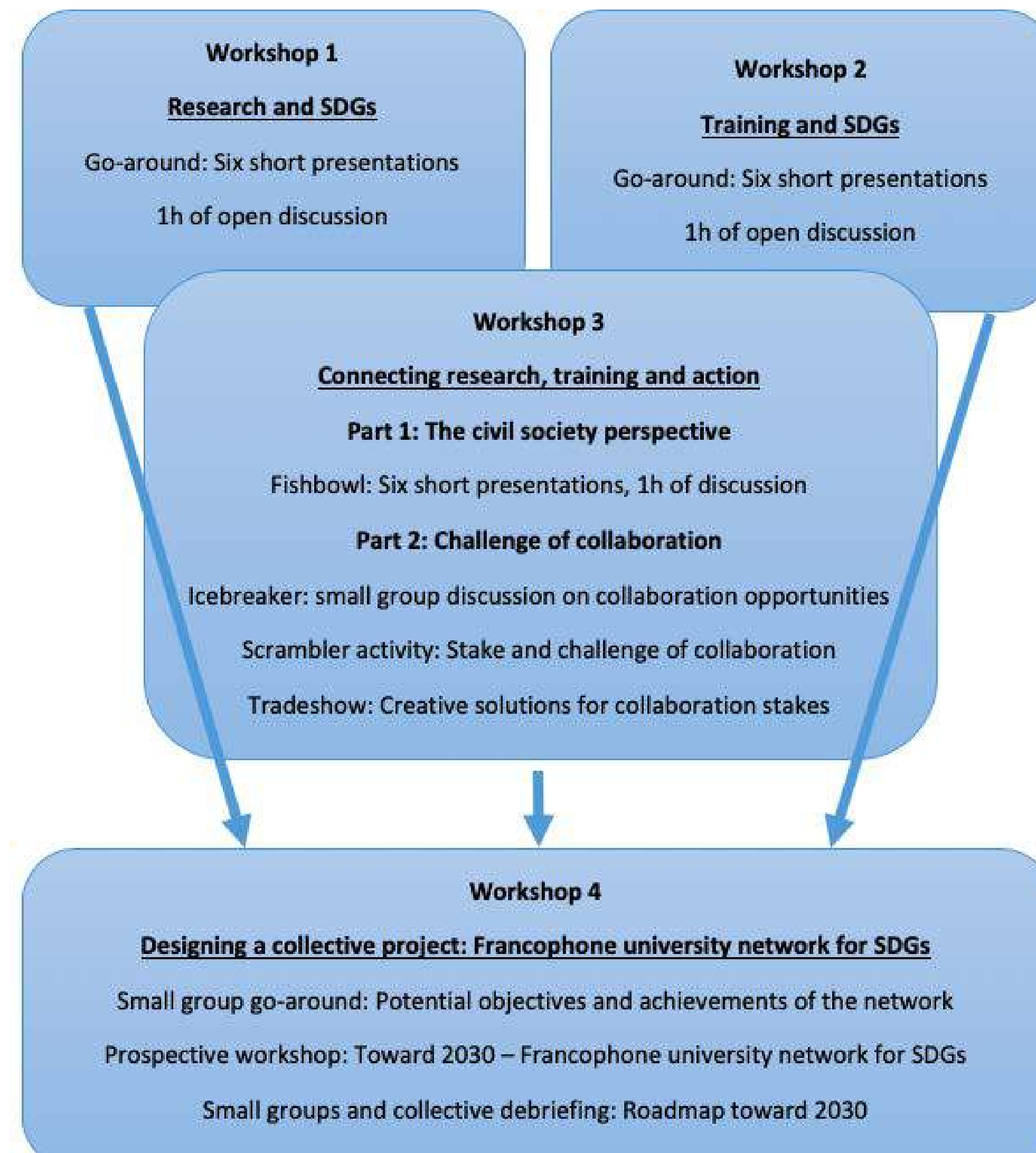
Workshop 2 (W#2) SDGs and Training: Building on Key Competencies in Sustainable Development, and their links with SDGs (Wiek et al., 2011) : 203-218.

Workshop 3 (W#3) Operationalization of the SDGs: Participatory workshop to explore necessary collaborations between research, education and civil society stakeholders.

Workshop 4 (W#4) Looking forward to 2030 for a global contribution of Francophone universities :
What is the way forward for Francophone universities, research organizations and their partners to accelerate the cross-cutting implementation of the SDGs?

In 2030, when we look back on our achievements, what do we want to be proud of?

METHODOLOGY



SDGs and research: Challenges of implementing the SDGs :

1. **Prioritizing** the UN has identified 169 targets;
2. **Implementation** that takes into account the interactions between the various SDGs as well as the different processes on which SDGs must be based;
3. **Transversal and cross-sectoral training** transdisciplinarity and sustainability key competencies with a focus on dialogue and collaboration;
4. **Localization** including taking into account particularities of each academic institution;
5. **Understanding and respect for local specificities** local cultures and traditional knowledge.

SDGs and Training: links between Key Competencies in Sustainable Development & SDGs.

Three broad discussion topics :

- 1. The challenges of SD education:** respect of the varying abilities and adaptability of individuals. Main challenge: to take the time to create dialogue... while going as fast as possible!!!
- 2. Students' involvement and commitment** represent a great opportunity to leverage SDG education.
- 3. The university's role:** institutional commitment is central as universities are among the most “durable” (lasting) institutions in society.

RESULTS (W#3)

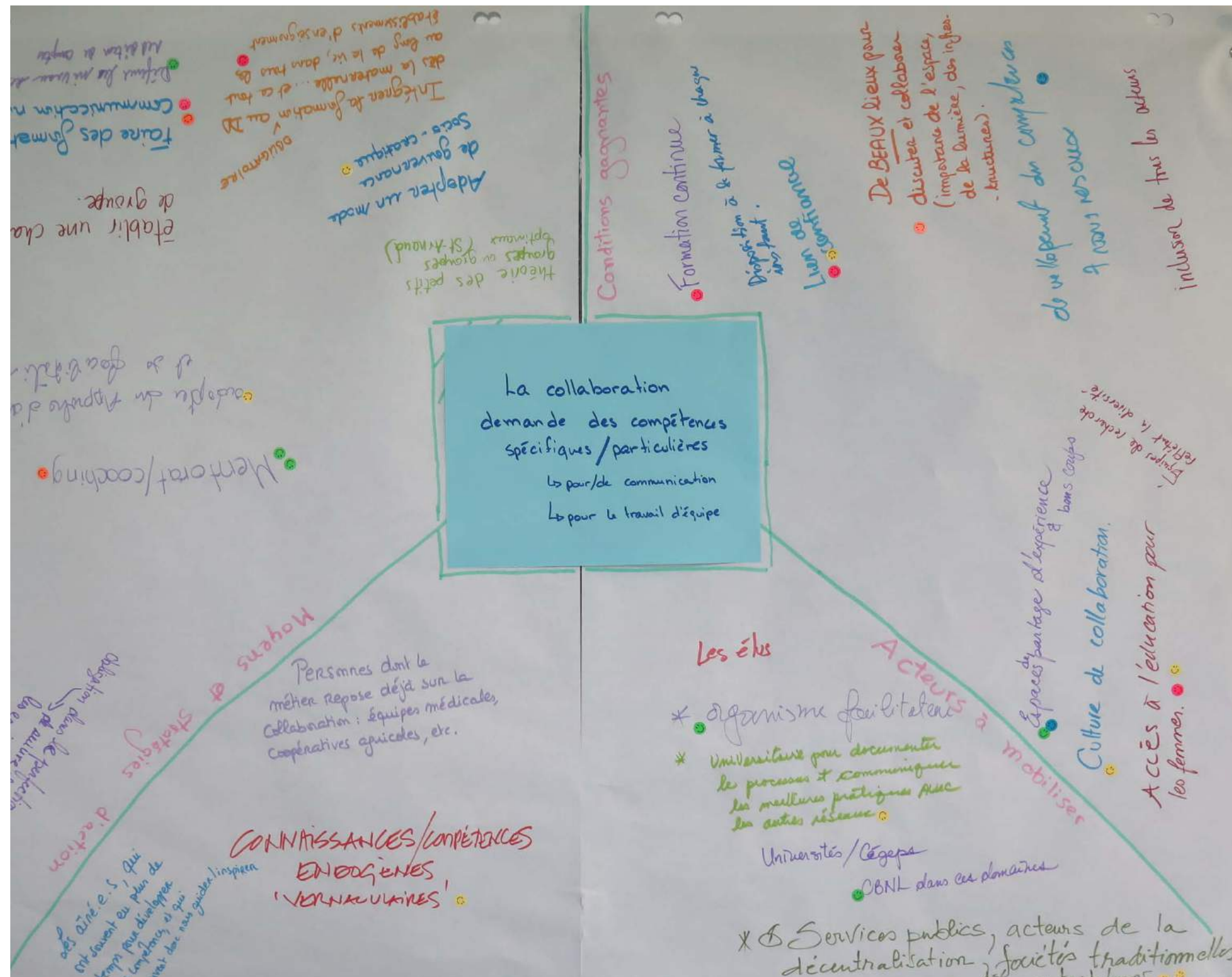
Operationalization of the SDGs: collaborations between research, education and civil society stakeholders.

Fishbowl activity



RESULTS (W#3)

Operationalization of the SDGs: collaborations between research, education and civil society stakeholders.



Example of the diagram developed by one of the six tables

Photo: Catherine Lemay-Bélisle, UQAC

Efficient structures are paramount

- Information flow systems
- Effectiveness
- Concrete results

Collaboration requires time

- Issue to maintain interest
- Staff change issue

Collaboration requires specific skills

- For communication
- For teamwork

Collaborative networks need to be developed

- Which transcend silos
- Which mobilize the necessary resources

Mutual understanding is a challenge in collaborative settings

- Common language
- Make compromises
- Develop a vision and share it

There is a need to go beyond the competition reflex

- Develop trust
- Develop openness
- Develop access to data

Looking forward to 2030 for a global contribution of francophone universities

What is the way forward for francophone universities, research organizations and their partners to accelerate the cross-cutting implementation of the SDGs?

In 2030, when we look back on our achievements, what do we want to be proud of?

- To strengthen the ties between university campuses of the Francophonie ****
- To link academic actors, students, researchers, civil servants and businesses / organizations ****
- To produce tangible benefits for civil society (promotes projects) ***
- To decompartmentalize knowledge and to facilitate access (open access) **
- To make knowledge accessible in French (including the "BABEL" translation and adaptation system) ***
- To contribute to students training and support **
- To reinforce civil society participation *
- To enable the popularization and operationalization of SDGs for decision-makers*
- To train leaders of tomorrow *
- To contributes to the ideation and realization of research projects in university campuses *
- To facilitate coordination of actions and projects about SDGs *
- To recognizes indigenous and local knowledge *

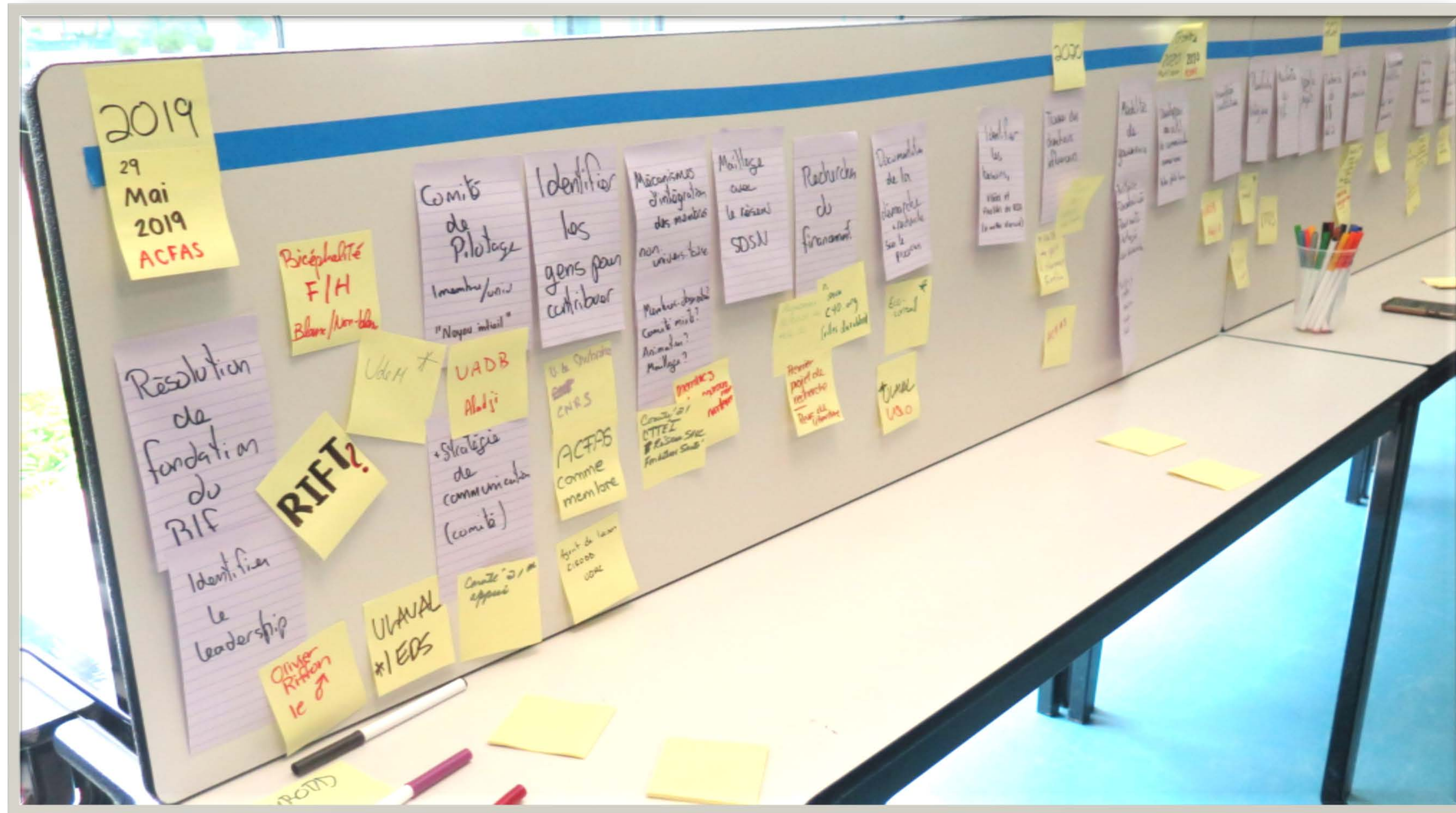
RESULTS W#4

Looking forward to 2030 for a global contribution of francophone universities



RESULTS W#4

Looking forward to 2030 for a global contribution of francophone universities





Thank you!