



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Education for Sustainable Development

Learning for Change



The world continues to face a number of critical challenges: human-induced climate change, rapid depletion of natural resources, increasing frequency of natural disasters, spread of infectious diseases, loss of biodiversity, violation of human rights, increased poverty, and the reliance of our economic systems on patterns of mass consumption.

These global issues are interdependent and demand a mode of development that balances the needs of environment, society, culture and economy and that shifts individual, group and industry activities towards more sustainable patterns. This move toward sustainability involves changing the fundamental attitudes and beliefs that guide our behaviour, and requires alternative ways of thinking, valuing and acting.

Education is a vital for bringing about these changes. Our current knowledge base does not contain the solutions to contemporary problems – the search for sustainability will be a learning process. Only through education and learning will we discover new approaches toward a better future.

Education for Sustainable Development

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a vision that seeks to re-orient education systems, educational institutions and teaching and learning processes toward the principles of sustainability. It aims to modify individual and social lifestyles toward protecting the environment and achieving social equity. ESD requires far-reaching change in the way education is practiced today:

- ♦ Transforming curricula and learning materials in formal education at all levels
- ♦ Re-orienting non-formal education, especially for adults
- ♦ Making learning systems more flexible and responsive to changing needs, providing new skills and opportunities
- ♦ Improving the pre-service and in-service training of teachers – among the most powerful change-agents in society – so that they can guide learners on how to live more sustainably



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Educating the Head and the Heart

ESD is the transfer of appropriate sets of knowledge and skills as well as a means to develop people's capacities and opportunities to engage with sustainability issues. In this way, ESD provides people with both the understanding and the values to determine alternative ways of living.

ESD may be implemented in many forms: a teacher weaving sustainability themes into primary education using participatory methods, a community development worker raising people's awareness on rights which are denied to them, or a public health worker training people to draw water from clean sources.



ESD, EFA and the MDGs

As a comprehensive approach to quality education and learning, ESD serves as a tool for the achievement of two major UN-supported initiatives, the Education for All (EFA) movement and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Through addressing the interdependence of issues such as education, poverty reduction and climate change, ESD brings together the environmental and development agendas and raises awareness about the significance of time-bound initiatives such as EFA and the MDGs.

- ♦ MDGs provide a set of tangible and measurable development goals within which education is a significant input and indicator
- ♦ EFA focuses on ways of providing quality educational opportunities to everyone
- ♦ ESD promotes a set of underlying values, relational processes and behavioural outcomes, which should characterize learning in all circumstances

United Nations Decade of ESD and Beyond

To reinforce the global importance of ESD, the United Nations declared 2005 – 2014 the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). With UNESCO leading the initiative, the DESD has served as a platform to promote the advancement and implementation of ESD on all geographical scales with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders.

As the DESD draws to a close, the focus of UNESCO has shifted to the development of a global programme framework for ESD that will serve to guide activities at all levels. This framework signals an evolution in the ESD agenda from awareness raising to large-scale implementation and will serve governments, international organizations and stakeholders across all sectors. UNESCO will continue its advocacy to ensure that ESD is duly reflected in the expected follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All objectives and as a guiding principle in the future engagement of global challenges and opportunities.

ESD in the Asian Pacific Region

Vision

Every person in the Asia Pacific region learns how to acquire and adapt their knowledge and behaviour to contribute to change for a sustainable future, and to take responsibility for their actions in consideration of others.

Mission

To develop a variety of partnerships and synergies through all forms of quality learning to empower individuals to make informed, appropriate decisions for our future.

Regional strategies are as follows:

- ♦ Advocacy through activities such as scenario building (to help address long-term perspectives and uncertainties)
- ♦ Developing shared stakeholder resource platforms
- ♦ Providing incentives for new partner engagement
- ♦ Promoting academic research
- ♦ Opportunities for stakeholder dialogue at local, national and international levels
- ♦ Developing communication strategies

Five Cluster Countries of UNESCO Jakarta

UNESCO Jakarta is a cluster office responsible for five countries in the South East Asia region: Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste. Each of these cluster countries has established a National Commission for UNESCO to assist in the coordination of programming and deliver expert advice.

ESD Programming Goals in the Cluster Countries

- ♦ Promote Green Schools
- ♦ Develop Climate Change Education curriculum, syllabi and learning materials
- ♦ Support national policy and strategies in ESD and Climate Change Education
- ♦ Establish ESD guidelines for teacher training institutions

For further information, please contact :

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