

Forum: Youth Assembly

Issue: The question of providing new methods to implement education for sustainable development in youth.

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Introduction

Sustainable [development](#) is meeting the needs of the present without compromising on the needs of the future. In 2015, [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) were adopted by all United Nations member states as a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development. These goals target the entire scope of life, including the environmental factors, social factors, economic factors, and political factors that contribute to the safety and security of lifestyles and lives.

Sustainable development has been a focal point when dealing with development in the 21st Century. The Human Development Index, which was created by a Pakistani Economist by the name Mahbub ul Haq, served as a measure for human development. The [Human Development Index](#) takes into account certain factors that generate the numbers it uses: [life expectancy at birth](#), expected years of schooling, mean of years of schooling for education, and [Gross National Income per capita](#) for the standard of living. According to the HDI, many African countries are severely lagging in the journey of human development, with HDI values as low as 0.35 in Niger.

Education on Sustainable development is considered essential for the fulfillment and continued adherence to the health of the planet and its people. Given the current era of globalization and the increasing complexity and uncertainty of human society, students are faced with a new demand that goes beyond what is learnt in the classroom and what is

necessary for a work-life. In the 21st Century, it is highly valued that students understand their rapidly changing world and learn how to participate in them. The ambition to provide aid to the needy already exists within the hearts and minds of students, yet a way to make these realities still did not; until 2002 when quality education in general - and specifically about sustainability - was emphasized during the UN World Summit in Johannesburg.

Definition of Key Terms

Agenda 21

A program of the United Nations related to sustainable development, the 21 referring to the 21st century.

Agenda 21, Chapter 36

A chapter in Agenda 21 that sets out big-picture proposals regarding the redirecting of education towards sustainable development, increasing public awareness, and promoting the training of individuals for the environmental and developmental sector.

Development

The process of change which improves the well-being of society in terms of quality of life and wealth.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

A United Nations program that was defined as education that encourages changes in lifestyles and understanding of the world around us to enable the creation of a more sustainable and fair society for all.

Education

The knowledge received through schooling or instruction. It can also be defined as the act of teaching knowledge to others and the act of receiving knowledge from someone else.

Gross National Income per Capita

The value of a country's goods and services, divided by the number of people living in that country. It shows how rich, on average, people are.

Globalization

A way that local or national methods or lifestyles become global. It describes the way societies interact with each other and merge.

Human Development Index

A measure of human development that is used to compare different countries. This measure is a scale from 0 to 1, where the higher the number is, the better the development. The index takes into account three factors: Life expectancy at birth, Literacy rates (How educated people are), and the standard of living.

Life expectancy at birth

The average number of years a newborn is expected to live if the mortality patterns (Pattern of death) at the time of birth remain the same in the future.

MASHAV

A program launched by Israel with the goal of sharing the technology and methods which allowed for Israel's growth.

17 Sustainable Development Goals

The goals were adopted by all United Nations member states as part of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. These goals focus on the four main aspects of development: Social factors (Goals 1 to 6, and 10), Environmental factors (Goals 7, 11, and 13 to 15), Economic factors (Goals 8 and 9), and Political factors (Goals 12, 16, and 17).

UN World Summit on Sustainable development (WSSD)

The WSSD was held in Johannesburg in 2002 to review the progress and agree to new global deals on sustainable development.

White-Collar Jobs

Jobs that belong to a class of employees typically having higher paying salaries. They perform highly skilled work, and these jobs typically need more education and

training overall. Examples of white-collar workers or jobs are doctors, lawyers, businessmen, etc.

Key Issues

Urbanization

Urbanization, by definition, refers to the movement of people from rural to urban areas. It is the process through which cities grow. This action is a growing trend within the world and it has been projected that, by 2050, two-thirds of the population will be living in urban areas. With an increase in the size and population of cities, the response has, more often than not, been to increase the number of facilities and the availability of them. Living standards are also much better in urban areas, where sanitation, clean water, and other important resources are widely available. With urbanization, a shift in the economic sectors also occurs. There is a sharp increase in the industrial and tertiary sectors and a similar decline in the agriculture sector. There are some countries that are an outlier to this trend, namely Sri Lanka, Samoa, and Barbados, however, the majority of countries have seen an increase in their industrial sectors.

An increase in Urbanization means the government has easy access to the facilities of more people than before, however this may result in a larger budget being needed to implement changes in the education system to accommodate sustainable development. The question of whether it would add as an additional subject or a part of another subject also raises a concern for governments in urbanized areas. Governments would also have to take into account the learning capabilities and methods of their students and the division of topics and activities among the years.

Socio-economic Impacts resulting from lack of Education on Sustainable Development

Education related to sustainable development has historically had a positive impact on most countries around the world. It allowed for the economic betterment of LICs worldwide, especially in Africa. An example of an African country would be Kenya. They implemented the ESD in 2013 and saw that the students were far more

engaged using their scheme. Overall, Kenya benefited from the program that aided in the integration of Sustainable Development within education.

From the perspective of the economy, integrating Sustainable Development into the education system has and will continue to have a positive impact. Without this integration, the living conditions and other social and economical factors may be bottlenecked to a point. This concept of sustainability will aid future generations in terms of goods and resources, as well as provide plenty for current generations to live off. Education regarding this topic allows students to use the concepts they have learnt in their path to becoming the changemakers of society. Without it, all additional efforts going into sustainable development such as food and social security will be destined to go to waste.

Environmental Impacts of Education on Sustainable Development

Under Sustainable Development comes Environmental security and development. This, naturally, means that students are educated on ways to preserve nature around them. This has a positive impact on the environment, simply because it enables students to preserve the natural land around them and help pass on the information to all those around them. These students create a domino effect on the people worldwide and locally.

The word ‘students’ serves as an umbrella term for learners. This means that teachers or principals could also be students when looking at ESD. This also means that an increase in ESD-educated teachers or policymakers will result in an increase in students who learn about the ESD and are in a program hosted for it. Students, in the past, have tried to upcycle trash and make use of it so that they don’t pollute their lands. This is an example of the effects of Sustainable Development in Education.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is an organisation by the UN that seeks to build peace through cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture internationally. UNESCO develops tools to help people live as

citizens of a global society with no hate or intolerance. It is also their vision to foster scientific programs for development, enable the freedom of expression, and strengthen bonds between nations.

UNESCO was involved in a past solution for providing new methods, known as the Education for Sustainable Development. They were the leading UN group for this and the solution was included in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as part of the fourth global goal, target 4.7. UNESCO, as an organisation, has a vision of a world where freedom of expression is not a dream and consists of a society free of unfairness and hatred.

United States of America

The USA plays a significant role in decision-making in the UN, especially considering it is a P5 nation. The nation has been putting significant effort into improving and furthering its education, which resulted in the creation of many thousand new majors, minors, programs, specializations, and more. They have also worked on the integration of Sustainable Development into their curriculum nationwide. They also attempted to emphasize on real-world problem-solving skills that are needed for Sustainable development as a whole. As a whole, the USA supports the idea of Sustainable Development in education and has shown effort in attempting to link the two together.

The USA created an organisation known as the U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development (USP). Their goal was to completely integrate Sustainable Development into education and learning in the United States. Created in 2003, and later (2005) made into a non-profit organization, USP has played a central -change-making- role in the US education system. From the Smithsonian Institution to the World Wildlife Fund, USP has had collaborators from all over the country trying to work on a single goal.

Republic of Kenya

The Republic of Kenya is located in East Africa, bordering South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, and the Indian Ocean. Most of the nation's workforce is employed in the agriculture sector and crops make up one-third of all arable land in the country. Kenya

has a good percentage of literate population which aided in the transition of the nation from a Low-Income status to a Low-Middle-Income Country. Kenya has acknowledged the need for the integration of Sustainable development into the education system.

In 2013, through the Ministry of Education in Kenya, they applied to [MASHAV](#) to establish a cooperation for the implementation of [Education for Sustainable Development](#). They attempted to make it a central focus of their curriculum. A 4-year plan was implemented in January 2013 and the first project was launched in August of the same year. This project taught students various subjects through real-life application. Examples of this include, but are not limited to Mathematics, Physics, and Technology through the concept of Water Purification; Science through organic agriculture and farming; Economics and Entrepreneurship through the establishment and the managing of an organic bakery.

Republic of India

India is located in South Asia, in the region known as the Indian Peninsula. It is a nation surrounded by Pakistan, Nepal, China, Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. India is invested in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors. They produce crops such as, but not limited to: rice, wheat, cotton, and sugarcane, along with heavy-duty and high technology industries. Traditionally speaking. The nation has always been a highly sustainable nation and a large part of the population, whether urban or rural, still abide by the reduce-reuse-recycle lifestyle. India believes in the integration of sustainable development with education and has made efforts to do so.

The Indian Government brought importance to the environmental education component as part of their curriculum in 1972 by setting up an organization under the Ministry of Environment and Forests for the very purpose of educating the youth on being sustainable and the effects of human activity on the environment. Organizations across India, whether of the government or not, are attempting to promote Education for Sustainable Development. Organizations such as the Centre of Science and Environment (CSE), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the National Council of Education, Research and Training (NCERT) are a few that work with educational institutions around the

country for the enforcement of ESD into their everyday lives. These organizations don't simply focus on Students, but also provide training sessions for Teachers, Principals, school administrators, and policymakers. Promotion of ESD is done through various methods in the country such as media. Architecture, and medicine.

Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
1972	1st UN conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE)	The various links between the global environment and the development needs were discussed.
1980	World Conservation Strategy identifies the concept of Sustainable development for the first time.	The Wcs defines the four main factors in natural resource destruction as Poverty, Population pressure, Social inequality, and International trade conditions.
1988	Creation of the International Panel on Climate Change.	Created to provide policymakers with regular scientific assessments on climate change.
1990	The Human Development Index was created by Mahbub ul Haq.	The HDI began to be included in the human development reports that were produced annually as a way to quantify the opportunities people are presented with.

1992	Earth Summit - United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.	Held in Rio de Janeiro. 173 Heads of State adopted the “Agenda 21” action program, which contained works such as but not limited to: - The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. - The creation of the UN Commission on Sustainable development (UNCSD).
1994	International Conference on Population and Development.	Held in Cairo. The goals set were: Universal access to family planning by 2015 and Strengthening women’s autonomy.
1995	World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen.	128 Heads of State and Government adopted the Declaration on Social Development. It aimed to address poverty, unemployment, and social disintegration.
2000	United Nations Millennium Summit in New York.	Eight Millennium Development Goals were set for 2015 addressing Poverty, Hunger, education, equality, infant mortality, and more.
2002	UN World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg	Governments negotiated and adopted two main documents: the Plan of Implementation and the Johannesburg

		Declaration on Sustainable development.
2008	World food, fuel, and financial crises converge.	Global food prices see an increase by 43% in 1 year. Growing demand for energy in countries such as China and India leads to a rapid increase in energy prices. Financial institutions stumble as the collapse of mortgage lending in the US and markets falter, creating a recession (when the economy becomes less active).
2011	The Arab Spring (Socio-political development).	A revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests, riots, and civil wars in the Arab world which resulted in multiple leadership changes.
2012	One of the first of the Millenium Development Goal targets is achieved.	The percentage of the world's people without access to safe drinking water is cut in half.
2014	WWF Living Planet report launched.	In the span of 44 years (1970-2014) half of all wildlife was lost.
2014	World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).	Held in Aichi- Nagoya, Japan. Ministers of education adopted a declaration and called for urgent action to mainstream ESD and include it into the post-2015 development agenda.

2015	World Education Forum held at Incheon, Korea.	Ministers of education adopted a global education strategy to implement the fourth Sustainable development goal by merging the concepts of Education for All and the ESD.
2019	40th session of UNESCO General Conference	The adoption of a global framework on ESD called “Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs” was done.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Agenda 21

It is a plan of action that is taken on globally by UN organizations, governments, and major groups in all areas where humans have had an impact on the environment. The 21 refers to the 21st century. The document consists of 40 chapters and is divided into 4 sections: social and economic dimensions, conservation and management of resources for development, strengthening the role of major groups, and means of implementation.

The entirety of the document was presented at the Earth Summit (1992) where 179 governments chose to adopt the program. In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly had a special session to assess the progress on the implementation of Agenda 21. The progress was deemed uneven and the key trends identified included globalization, inequality in income, and the continued deterioration of the environment. The Earth Summit held in 2002 affirmed UN commitment to the complete implementation of Agenda 21 alongside other international agreements. The implementation by member states of the UN remains voluntary. The Commission on Sustainable Development acts as the main forum on sustainable development and has become the preparatory committee for summits and sessions on the implementation of Agenda 21.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Education for Sustainable Development is defined as a tool for the empowerment of learners to make informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental, economic, and socio-political stability, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. ESD is recognised as an essential element of the 4th Sustainable Development Goal on Quality Education and a keystone for the fulfillment of other SDGs. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is the leading UN agency that is responsible for the coordination of the ESD for the 2030 goal. The ESD was also included in the SDG Goal 4 (Target 4.7).

Compared to educating consumers or employees in a rigid method, teaching and education are to take place so that students can think and act for themselves without following a majority consensus. Students should be given the opportunity to become change-makers and given the opportunity to be able to intervene in society and act rather than passively observe society. It is also recommended that students learn in an interdisciplinary way across the four factors of sustainable development. The aim is that the teacher is more an idea instigator as opposed to being the knowledge provider.

Eight competencies were published in 2017 by the UNESCO after intense discussions on the issue. These competencies include, but are not limited to anticipatory competency (ability to assess the consequences of actions), and critical thinking competency (the ability to question norms, practices, and opinions). Many of these competencies are imperative for learners to find sustainable solutions and possibly achieve them.

Possible Solutions

The creation of an organization within the Ministry of Education that manages a Sustainable Development field study for high school students

In this field study, students will be given free rein to attempt to come up with sustainable solutions to problems that their city might be facing. They will draft a proposal, and with the help of teachers or the organization's staff, create a final copy to be

submitted for evaluation. If the idea and the implementation are clear and concise, then the proposal could be passed on to the responsible government ministry. This gives students the opportunity to integrate sustainable development and a sustainable mindset into their education and lifestyle, respectively. The organisation will be a department under the Ministry of Education and they will focus on the implementation and the management of this project. Their role would be to, firstly, introduce this concept in schools, then integrate it into the curriculum during mandatory lessons, and, lastly, support students on their journey to draft the final solution.

An example could be that a city does not sell fairtrade goods, so they make a proposal and submit it to this organization where the proposal will be evaluated and, if good enough, submitted to the department of trade in that government.

The creation of an internship program in UNESCO which focuses on the integration of Sustainable Development within Education

This internship will aid in informing the new generation on why Education is needed for sustainable development and how the United Nations are trying to integrate it into the education systems around the world. The internship will end with a final assignment. This task will enable interns to collaborate with UNESCO officials and create a research paper detailing the methodology and progress made by a particular country, which the organization themselves will decide. At the end of the course, students or interns should be able to explain in detail why Sustainable Development should be integrated into education and how it is being done in at least one country.

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Appendix

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