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Education must do more than produce individuals who can read, write and count. It must nurture global citizens who can rise to the challenges of the 21st century.

**Ban Ki-moon**

### Asitha Jayawardena

Communications (Research, Sustainability and Systems) and Member of RCE London and Sustainability Research Group of London South Bank University

## Message

# Welcome to the first edition of the RCE magazine

**Professor Ros Wade and Lynn Vickery,**  
London South Bank University



With increasing numbers of policy makers and practitioners now officially recognizing that this world is in the throes of a planetary climate crisis, 'business as usual' will not work any longer and nothing less than a complete a paradigm shift in the way we run our economy, social and education systems is needed.

The time is right to put transformatory education for sustainability at the forefront of all our thinking and acting. This magazine is designed to bring you short accessible summaries of key research and project work in this growing field and to equip you with the inspiration, ideas and tools to become effective agents of change for a sustainable future.

Our vulnerable ecosystems are under threat like never before and we are putting increasing pressure on social and political systems – this threatening the stability of the whole planet and the very future of life on earth as we know it. We can all contribute to changing this but in order to do this, we need to be able to imagine an alternative future and chart new paths to a world where the wellbeing of society and ecology is centre stage. The RCE movement is a global network of centre which are committed to taking forward this vision and putting it into practice. The network will give you access to a global learning space where you can share ideas and find partners to develop collaborations for sustainability. (For further information and to find your nearest RCE– RCE service centre website <http://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/rces-worldwide>).

This magazine will give you access to cutting edge thinking and a link to the main article if you wish to delve deeper. Do join us and be part of the change you want to see happen.

Since the beginning of the Decade, a number of initiatives have boosted ESD at the local level. Among the most notable is the Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) programme of the United Nations University (IAS)... The global RCE network has mobilized multiple stakeholders including universities, other education institutions, local authorities, NGOs and various other players at the local level during the Decade that were able to implement a variety of noteworthy sustainable solutions.

**UNESCO**

# ESD or EfS?

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)	Education for Sustainability (EfS)
<p>Associated with mainstream – used by UNESCO and governments in documents</p> <p>Usually associated with the term ‘sustainable development’ which to many implies endorsement of capitalist model of economic growth</p> <p>Also used by some NGOs in joint NGO/government</p> <p>Supporters of this term argue that it acknowledges the need for development in many parts of the world and emphasises that this should be sustainable</p> <p>Some practitioners feel that the term ‘ESD’ is still an evolving concept and site of struggle and should be reclaimed</p>	<p>Does not tend to be used frequently by government – not mainstream</p> <p>Inclusive of and open to a range of perspectives, especially those which challenge current neo-liberal hegemony</p> <p>Supporters of this term feel that it challenges the Western model of development and neo-liberal perspectives</p> <p>Emphasises value commitments (FOR sustainability)</p> <p>Embodies participatory and democratic processes</p>

Adapted from *Journeys around Education for Sustainability*, edited by Jenneth Parker and Ros Wade

## 17 SDGs and SDG4 on Education

### Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1: No Poverty
- Goal 2: Zero Hunger
- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being
- Goal 4: Quality Education
- Goal 5: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
- Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- Goal 13: Climate Action
- Goal 14: Life below Water
- Goal 15: Life on Land
- Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

### Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its targets

#### Seven Outcome Targets:

- 4.1 Universal primary and secondary education
- 4.2 Early childhood development and universal pre-primary education
- 4.3 Equal access to technical/vocational and higher education
- 4.4 Relevant skills for decent work
- 4.5 Gender equality and inclusion
- 4.6 Universal youth literacy
- 4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship

#### Three means of implementation:

- 4.a Effective learning environments
- 4.b Scholarships
- 4.c Teachers and educators



# Education's role in SDGs

Wade and Atkinson (2017).

A chapter from *Sustainable Development Research at Universities in the United Kingdom*.

World Sustainability Series, Springer International Publishing AG.

The development of the SDGs offers the potential to move policy and practice in a new direction and put the world on a course which promotes human wellbeing and development within the ecological and planetary boundaries of our Earth.

*Wade & Atkinson (2017)*

All the SDGs come down to education...

***Malala Yousafzai***

ESD's focus on systems thinking and interdisciplinarity has the potential to maximise the effectiveness of innovation and to change behaviours.

*Wade & Atkinson (2017)*

An understanding of the natural world and what's in it is a source of not only a great curiosity but great fulfillment.

***David Attenborough***

The discussion around the development of the SDGs offer a real opportunity to put our planet on a more sustainable trajectory...

*Wade & Atkinson (2017)*

**The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) have a crucial role in to play in education and training, not merely in improving the quality of education (SDG 4) but across all the 17 SDGs. Indeed, embedding ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) within all future policy and practice is an imperative.**

A key weakness of the SDG programme is not identifying the wide range of social groups that need to be mobilized and one is educators. ESD aims to find a balance between the environmental and the social in order to promote ecological and social justice and this is counter hegemonic to the current neoliberal global paradigm. So, it has implications for how ESD is related to the mainstream educational agendas.

Crucial is the kind of education on offer (quality) as well as access to education (quantity) and so far educational achievements have often led us to living unsustainably. More of the same type of education will inevitably lead to a continuing spiral of unsustainability. Moreover, UNESCO demonstrates how education and learning are an essential building block to achieve all SDGs. The key question is, what kind of education is required to live sustainably?

CONTINUED

The benefits of education permeate all walks of life right from the moment of birth. If we are to eradicate poverty and hunger, improve health, protect our planet and build more inclusive, resilient and peaceful societies, then every individual must be empowered with access to quality lifelong learning, with special attention to opportunities for girls and women. The evidence is unequivocal: education saves lives and transforms lives, it is the bedrock of sustainability. This is why we must work together across all development areas to make it a universal right.

***Irina Bokova***

ESD is the learning that achieves sustainable development and ESDFA (ESD for all) gives the shared development of a framework that brings together social and environmental concerns more effectively in the context of learning. However, policymakers seem to be slow in engaging with the educational community on the transformative role of ESD.

In the last two decades marketization and privatisation trends have frequently skewed educational practice to unsustainable development. Therefore, finding evidence of a commitment to re-orient educational systems towards sustainable development is quite difficult in many countries, including England. Scotland and Wales have shown much more leadership in this area.

Still, there is an increasing demand from UK students to embed sustainability knowledge and skills with the taught curriculum and the business sector support this. But there is a limited focus at the national and global level on transformative ESD.

To achieve the SDGs what is needed is not more of the same education but the kind of education that is essential for the future of our planet and people. In short, the SDGs cannot be achieved without ESD. In other words, ESD offers both a framework and a process to set our planet on a more sustainable trajectory. Thus, ESD can provide the link which connects us all with our common humanity and our relationship with the natural world.

Wade, R, Atkinson, H (2017) The role of education for sustainability in the sustainable development goals – changing policy and practice? pp351-371 In: Leal Filho, W (ed.) *Sustainable Development Research at Universities in the United Kingdom*, World Sustainability Series, Springer International Publishing AG.  
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-47883-8\_20.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311966762\\_The\\_Role\\_of\\_Education\\_for\\_Sustainability\\_in\\_the\\_Sustainable\\_Development\\_Goals-Changing\\_Policy\\_and\\_Practice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311966762_The_Role_of_Education_for_Sustainability_in_the_Sustainable_Development_Goals-Changing_Policy_and_Practice)

Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.

**John Muir**

...RCE initiative (Regional Centre of Expertise on ESD) co-ordinated up by the United Nations University-Institute of Advanced Studies is also another potential driver for change...

Their purpose is to mobilize individuals and communities towards sustainable development, using the most appropriate expertise, knowledge and skills and they are founded on the principles and values on ESD in relation to social and ecological rights and justices, locally and globally.

*Wade & Atkinson (2017)*

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

**Margaret Mead**

New patterns of living, working and being are undoubtedly needed and ESD can provide the link which connects us all with our common humanity and our relationship with the natural world.

*Wade & Atkinson (2017)*

Mula, Tilbury, Ryan, Mader, Dlouha, Mader, Benayas, Dlouhý, Alba (2017).  
*International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 18(5).

# Professional development for university educators

The direction of global dialogues and plans, for ESD and professional development, will be an important strategic point of focus for higher education worldwide.

*Mula et al (2017)*

Education is a foundation for sustainable development. Not only does quality education, especially for girls, help to improve health and livelihood outcomes, it also contributes to active and informed global citizens. Educating the next generation of leaders about the importance of protecting our environment and combating climate change is a key investment for a sustainable planet and future for us all.

**Ted Turner**

The key outcomes from the UE4SD project were intended to address this demand for greater understanding and capacity in ESD within the sector.

*Mula et al (2017)*

**We have seen that the education system reinforces unsustainable thinking and practice. Therefore, efforts to transform our societies must prioritise education of educators.**

This paper focuses on university educators and critically reviews the professional development and policy landscape challenges with ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) and provides a critical review of existing practice, international policy framework and literature relating to ESD, professional development and higher education. The article is informed by a pan-European collaboration involving 33 countries and assessed lessons learned from ESD professional development initiatives.

ESD has grown in visibility and status worldwide, with a clear increase of activity in higher education. However, universities currently lack capacity to integrate ESD effectively into mainstream teaching practices.

Many ESD practitioners remain focused on teaching issues arising in sustainable development research and delivering specialist modules or courses in sustainability.

CONTINUED

Education is a fundamental right and the basis for progress in every country. Parents need information about health and nutrition if they are to give their children the start in life they deserve. Prosperous countries depend on skilled and educated workers. The challenges of conquering poverty, combatting climate change and achieving truly sustainable development in the coming decades compel us to work together. With partnership, leadership and wise investments in education, we can transform individual lives, national economies and our world.

**Ban Ki-moon**

There is a need for greater understanding of the multi-level task of integrating ESD into professional development activities with a view of advancing institutional change and decisively influence the teaching and learning discourse of higher education.

The paper considers three lessons learned in ESD professional development in the 3-year period:

- ESD is associated with a unique set of ‘competences’ and ‘capabilities’ that emphasise the need for thinking holistically, envisioning change and transforming learning systems.
- ESD professional development is a long-term practice, needs to be institutionalized sector-wide and must move from being marginal to pilot initiatives to be embedded as core provision.
- ESD professional development strategies should reflect an institution-wide, systemic approach that engages educators to influence practice across all higher education programmes as a learning objective and an institutional teaching and learning priority.

The literature to date has little focus on the type of capacity building processes that best contribute to changing teaching and learning cultures in higher education.

Therefore, the project focused on developing a publication and online resource to share the leading professional development approaches in ESD across Europe.

Mula, I, Tilbury, D, Ryan, A, Mader, M, Dlouha, J, Mader, C, Benayas J, Dlouhý, J, Alba, A (2017) Catalysing change in higher education for sustainable development: A review of professional development initiatives for university educators. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 18(5), pp.798-820.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316439809\\_Catalysing\\_Change\\_in\\_Higher\\_Education\\_for\\_Sustainable\\_Development\\_A\\_Review\\_of\\_Professional\\_Development\\_Initiatives\\_for\\_University\\_Educators](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316439809_Catalysing_Change_in_Higher_Education_for_Sustainable_Development_A_Review_of_Professional_Development_Initiatives_for_University_Educators)

Little is known about the type of capacity building processes that are contributing to changing teaching and learning cultures in higher education, and most scholarly work and practice is needed to understand how university educators develop ESD competences through professional development, what strategic concerns they have in relation to ESD, or what ESD means in relation to quality.

*Mula et al (2017)*

Diversity is a richness. It's not a problem.

**Antonio Guterres**

This broader perspective is embraced by ESD,... not just to embed new elements into the existing system, but to alter that system.

*Mula et al (2017)*

The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives.

**Native American Proverb**

Existing activities are often driven largely by sustainable development research and the teaching of specialist topics in sustainability, rather than critically reflective and innovative pedagogies that extend capabilities of staff as well as students.

*Mula et al (2017)*

Dlouhá and Zahradník  
(2015).

*Envigogika*, 10(1) -  
Reviewed Papers/  
Recenzované články

# Social learning for sustainable regional development

Sustainable development is a normative concept, based on empirical evidence of environmental degradation and creates strategies at different levels (from local to global) to avoid possible future risks.

*Dlouhá & Zahradník (2015)*

A sustainable future is one in which a healthy environment, economic prosperity and social justice are pursued simultaneously to ensure the well-being and quality of life of present and future generations.

***Learning for a Sustainable Future***

...broader discussions about top-down versus bottom-up processes in which scientists are involved could be held, with the preliminary conclusion that the role of science in sustainable regional development is also becoming more and more decentralised, and science is entering into multiple interactions with other social actors...

*Dlouhá & Zahradník (2015)*

**The aim of this article was to explore how scientists could assist in complex sustainability processes at a regional level and to identify “success factors” through the use of social learning. The authors mapped this field within the Czech context and focused on how communication processes can support social learning. The research also aimed to provide know-how and tools for the facilitation of the negotiation processes in the sustainability field.**

The authors firstly outlined the long tradition of the Czech Republic in environmental activities and related thinking, reflected in the educational system and gave a number of examples. Unfortunately, pro-environmental activities have reduced from the start of 2000 and the authors identified problems, such as isolation of NGOs from policy making and the use of negotiation processes, which have not been based on the tradition of deliberation and consultation. They maintained that sustainable development requires multi dimensional approaches from a range of stakeholders who consequently need to be more directly involved in policy making and implementation. They felt that advice from experts is not sufficient to address the sustainability context while scientific knowledge can be generated within and as a result of interaction with other actors.

The research involved a review and comparison of Czech case studies collected in an on-line database (Enwiki, 2014) and in the *Envigogika* special issue (*Envigogika*, 2015). Different cases throughout the Czech Republic related to the negotiation processes in environmental or sustainability field were collated and analyzed. Particular attention was paid to the roles of actors with special emphasis on the roles of scientists.

Of the 47 considered cases only three seemed to represent resolved issues, however, positive or negative impacts on the local situation were observed during decision making and negotiation.

CONTINUED

Supporters of sustainable development generally included NGOs, local municipalities and scientists and some groups of local citizens while opponents included local municipalities and citizens, state authorities, business enterprises and developers.

Success factors identified:

- Active involvement of local actors in the vision development
- A focus on local needs, such as economic activity as well as environmental aspects
- Transparent and open decision making processes
- Bottom up approaches with face to face communication as part of the process
- Active involvement of local actors in the project
- Parameters not too wide
- Led by NGOs with a great deal of experience and social capital in the local area
- External financial resources available

The authors noted that none of the successful projects required state involvement and were not seen as a threat to community wellbeing. The absence of a strong alternative vision also enabled the process. Deadlock appeared where no innovative and widely acceptable approach was developed and actors had simply to choose between two controversial sides.

The authors concluded that the role of science in sustainable regional development is becoming more and more decentralised, and science is entering into multiple interactions with other social actors. The implications of bottom up, multi dimensional approaches need to be considered in developing the future roles of scientists.

*Note: This is summarised by Ros Wade.*

Dlouhá J and Zahradník M (2015) Potential for social learning in sustainable regional development: analysis of stakeholder interaction with a focus on the role of scientists. *Envigogika* 10(1) – Reviewed Papers/ Recenzované články. DOI: 10.14712/18023061.476

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jana\\_Dlouha2/publication/281223559\\_Potential\\_for\\_social\\_learning\\_in\\_sustainable\\_regional\\_development\\_analysis\\_of\\_stakeholder\\_interaction\\_with\\_a\\_focus\\_on\\_the\\_role\\_of\\_scientists/links/563cb9d608ae45b5d28974ac/Potential-for-social-learning-in-sustainable-regional-development-analysis-of-stakeholder-interaction-with-a-focus-on-the-role-of-scientists.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jana_Dlouha2/publication/281223559_Potential_for_social_learning_in_sustainable_regional_development_analysis_of_stakeholder_interaction_with_a_focus_on_the_role_of_scientists/links/563cb9d608ae45b5d28974ac/Potential-for-social-learning-in-sustainable-regional-development-analysis-of-stakeholder-interaction-with-a-focus-on-the-role-of-scientists.pdf)

In essence sustainable development is about five key principles: quality of life; fairness and equity; participation and partnership; care for our environment and respect for ecological constraints - recognising there are 'environmental limits'; and thought for the future and the precautionary principle.

***Sustainable Wealth  
London project***

The research shows how important it is to investigate social aspects of regional development issues – this kind of reflection helps to obtain some insight into ongoing processes of policy formulation and decision-making with a prospect of wider research allowing more solid generalisations so that experiences could be even transferred to other contexts.

*Dlouhá & Zahradník (2015)*

Educated girls have children later and smaller families overall. They are less likely to die during pregnancy or birth, and their offspring are more likely to survive past the age of five and go on to thrive at school and in life. Women who attended school are better equipped to protect themselves and their children from malnutrition, deadly diseases, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

***Erna Solberg/ Graça Machel***