

THE UN DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Awareness – Advocacy – Action

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Strengthening Values and Improving Life
Through Education for Sustainable Development

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We have but one world. Either we work together to save it or we will perish together with it.

This may sound like a doomsday scenario or an alarmist call, but it is “the inconvenient truth,” the tragic truth of the reality of the NOW. We live in a Planet in Peril, standing at the brink of disaster and annihilation, a wounded Earth, waiting to be healed, a violent world, yearning for peace.

We were blessed with a beautiful and bountiful Nature, which the Creator gave to us to use and to care for. But we have acted like absolute owners of the universe, instead of being faithful and just stewards. We are destroying our planet through our irresponsible, egoistic and selfish lifestyles. As a result, we have disturbed the balance of nature leading to climate change, global warming, the temperature of the Earth rising faster than predicted by scientists, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes and other disasters with increasing frequency and intensity.

In addition to this, we have violence, cruelty, and bloodshed everywhere, displaced families, millions of refugees without shelter, food and water, all because of hatred and discrimination, of injustice and intolerance. We live in an age of fear, insecurity and uncertainty.

Then we have the current global economic crisis brought about by greed and corruption, fraud and manipulation of the highest order using the most sophisticated technologies. The financial institutions are bankrupt and unemployment has reached its highest. Businesses and global empires have collapsed. We have to remind ourselves of what Mahatma Gandhi said:

"Earth has enough for everyone's need, but not for anyone's greed." Yes, greed is the root cause of the present financial dilemma.

Who can stop this race towards global catastrophe? Is it the government, the Church, the United Nations, the schools? It is all of us, you and I, who have caused the problem, it is we who can and should solve it. It is we who can make a difference. We can change the world by changing ourselves.

This calls for a radical and total transformation of our minds and hearts, of our behavior and lifestyle; a re-education of humankind; a change in our ways of thinking, feeling and acting.

It is in recognition of the crucial role of education as a key instrument in bringing about change, that the United Nations proclaimed the years 2005-2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD).

A Global Effort, A Decade for Change with Education as the major key for Awareness—Advocacy—Action with UNESCO as lead agency.

Why Education for Sustainable Development? Let us look again at the global scenario, the state of the environment in the Asia-Pacific, and at our country.

AN ENDANGERED PLANET
Save the planet Earth for future generations
THE ASIA-PACIFIC: A REGION AT RISK
Poverty
Pollution
Corruption

THE PHILIPPINES: A NATION IN CRISIS
Wasted potential
Unfulfilled promise
Crisis of confidence in leadership

The need for responsible citizenship and committed leadership

What are the outcomes we seek?

To increase AWARENESS
To strengthen ADVOCACY
To initiate and sustain ACTION towards improving the Quality of Life for All in a Peaceful and Sustainable Society
To change our mind-sets, our ways of thinking, our views of the world and the future
To deepen our values and care for the environment, economy, society and culture
To change our behavior and lifestyles towards the improvement of the quality of life for all

How can these fundamental changes be brought about? What is the educational paradigm to meet the challenges of the 21st century, an era of rapid change, violence, insecurity and uncertainty?

LIFELONG EDUCATION IN A LEARNING SOCIETY

Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The Treasure Within*.
Report of the International Commission of Education for the 21st Century to UNESCO.

Four Interrelated pillars of education: LEARNING TO LEARN
Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Live Together, Learning to Be

A fifth pillar: Learning to Un-learn

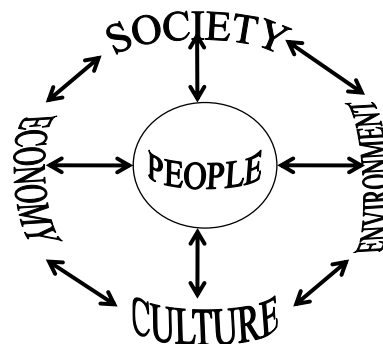
What is there for us to learn TODAY, if we want to pass over to the next generations a more human and just, a more compassionate, more peaceful and sustainable future?

The United Nations has provided us the answer: Education for Sustainable Development. We have to act TODAY, or else there will be no TOMORROW for our children, and our children's children.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT? SD is an evolving concept.

SD is... “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

“To promote the pillars of Sustainable Development—economic development, social development, and safeguarding the environment—as interdependent and mutually reinforcing” (World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002)



People are at the heart of SD

**SD is for PEOPLE;
to improve the quality of their lives**

FOR WHOM IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Sustainable Development for ALL

From a scientific concept to a moral precept, this requires fundamental changes in THINKING and UNDERSTANDING, VALUING and ACTING, in BEHAVIOR, in LIFESTYLE.

WHAT IS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

ESD is that education which addresses the four pillars of SD as interdependent and interconnected dimensions—society, culture, environment and economy—to bring about the improvement of the quality of life for all.

ESD is a dynamic and collective effort that envisions a world where every person has the chance to benefit from educational opportunities and to learn the lifestyles, behaviors and values necessary to create a sustainable future.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

1. promote and improve the quality of education to focus on lifelong education, the acquisition of knowledge, values and skills to improve the quality of life
2. re-orient, re-think and reform the curriculum towards knowledge, values and skills in building a sustainable world
3. raise awareness and develop enlightened, responsible and committed citizens, and
4. create synergies with initiatives of other sectors to adopt sustainable and responsible modes of production and consumption, to work together towards a common vision: a peaceful and sustainable future for generations to come.

HOW?

The Need for a Holistic Approach to ESD

Educating for peace and sustainable future societies requires a new approach, moving away from traditional, rigid, content-oriented methodologies to more holistic, integrated, innovative and creative strategies. There is a need for a human-centered, future-oriented paradigm and a holistic approach to teaching and learning.

A Holistic and Integrated Approach to Teaching and Learning for a Peaceful and Sustainable Future means a shift from content to process, from knowing to understanding, valuing and acting, from teaching to learning. Learners work towards personal integration, wholeness and inner sense of harmony.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE HOLISTIC PROCESS

A holistic approach to teaching and learning challenges individuals to go beyond gathering and mastering facts, concepts and theories about sustainable development.

It envisions developing persons who have a genuine care and deep concern for nature and the environment, for the social institutions and the cultural legacy of a people—their physical, economic, moral and spiritual well-being; in order to improve the quality of life of the present and future generations, thus contributing to the building of a peaceful and sustainable future.

It calls for values integration across disciplines, into each subject in the curriculum, into our daily life and behavior.

Immediately following this presentation, there will be workshops to demonstrate the holistic approach to education in a 4-step teaching-learning cycle that aims to develop the whole person, the intellect, the emotions, and the will to act; our human faculties of knowing, understanding, valuing and acting.

Under each of the four interrelated dimensions of Education for Sustainable Development are **content areas** and **core values** which can guide us to re-orient, reform and re-package our curriculum: **what** and **how** we teach, **why** and **what for**.

I. Social Dimension

Content Areas

Human Rights

Basic human rights
Basic Education-Literacy
Human shelter
Social justice-poverty, equal opportunity
Rights of Minorities
Non discrimination

Gender Equity

Gender roles and gender equality
Equal opportunity, non-discrimination
Respect for women
Enabling fulfillment of potential in education, work, societal participation

Good Governance (at all levels)

Transparency and accountability
Social inclusion and civic participation
Civics, citizenship
Democracy
Bilateral and multilateral relationships

Peace and Human Security

Disarmament, terrorism
Global solidarity
Hunger, malnutrition, sanitation
Displaced peoples and refugees
Conflict resolution
Development aid
UN system

Holistic Health

Diseases, sanitation
Sexually transmitted diseases
Hunger, malnutrition
Drug and alcohol education
Infant mortality, life expectancy
Contraception

Core Value

Peace and Non-Violence

Related Values

Respect for human rights
Responsible citizenship
Good governance
Security
Holistic health

Love and compassion
Gratitude
Self Worth
Human dignity
Gender equity

II. Cultural Dimension

Content Areas

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Migration and refugees
Respect, appreciation and understanding of diversity
Strengthening of identity/language of cultural minorities
Enrichment by diversity
Peaceful coexistence
Stereotypes, racism and discrimination

Intercultural and Interfaith Understanding

Peace and nonviolence
Tolerance and understanding
Open dialogue
Conflict resolution, reconciliation

Cultural Heritage, Tangible and Intangible

Protecting cultural and linguistic heritage, oral heritage
Natural and built heritage
Use of local language in education

Cultural Goods and Services

Sustainable cultural tourism
Cultural industries
Productive diversity
Media, advertising

Indigenous Knowledge

Acknowledgment of local knowledge of flora and fauna, water use, sustainable agricultural practices
Respect for world views of nature and society
Traditional livelihoods

Core Value

Tolerance of Diversity

Related Values

Intercultural and inter-faith understanding
Respect for tradition
Unity in diversity
Appreciation of indigenous knowledge and world views
Global Unity

III. Environmental Dimension

Content Areas

Natural heritage and resources— water, energy, agriculture, biodiversity

Air and water quality
Optimal use of renewable energies
Preservation of biodiversity
Protection/restoration of ecosystems
Protection of natural heritage
Sustainable environmental tourism
Intergenerational justice

Rural Development

Sustainable agricultural practices
Fertilizers, pesticides, weedicides
Water damming, soil loss and desertification
Genetically modified foods
Deforestation
Livelihood and quality of life

Climate Change

Greenhouse gas emissions
Global warming
Coastal regions and small islands
Water

Sustainable Urbanization

Industrialization, globalization
Population, migration from rural areas
Pollution—air, water, chemical, noise
Recycling and waste reduction
Wetlands conservation
Sustainable lifestyle patterns

Disaster Prevention and Mitigation

Population density

Planning land occupation

Appropriate construction

At-risk populations—vulnerability reduction and self help strategies

Natural hazards

Early warning systems

Core Value

Care and Protection of the Environment

Related Values

Just stewardship of natural resources

Sustainable lifestyle

Interconnectedness

Intergenerational equity

Creation spirituality

IV. Economic Dimension

Content Areas

Poverty Reduction

Socioeconomic problems

Underdevelopment

Poverty and marginalization

Economic inclusion and participation

Access to culturally appropriate technologies

Debt reduction, microloans

Corporate Responsibility and Accountability

Ethics, transparency and good governance

Responsible commercial practices

Responsible corporate citizenship

Social and environmental responsibility

Economic impacts and multilateral trade

Responsibility

Foreign investment

Market Economy

Effects of globalization

Equitable global governance systems

Global market regulatory environment

Sustainable patterns of production and consumption/supply and demand

Transportation, food, travel, waste reduction, and optimal use of energy

Bringing the market in line with environment and social equity goals

Core Value
Equitable Sharing of Resources

Related Values

Transparency and accountability
Justice
Work ethic
Right to Work
Equal Access to Education
Rule of Law

Poverty reduction
Productive and meaningful life
Responsibility
Empowerment of people
Responsible Corporate Citizenship

Let me bring you back to the outcomes we seek:

- To increase our AWARENESS of the state of our endangered Planet, and what we can do to save it;
- To strength our ADVOCACY, our commitment towards creating a peaceful and sustainable future and improve the quality of life for all; and
- To initiate and sustain ACTION NOW and WHERE we are.

All these imply CHANGE of minds, hearts and wills, of behaviors and lifestyles.

Before we can change the world, our region, our country, our community, our school, our family, we must be willing to change ourselves.

Let me end with the wisdom of one of the greatest advocates of Peace, Human Rights, Democracy and Sustainable Development in our Region and in the world:

“You must be the change you want to see.” Gandhi