

UNESCO

Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014

UNESCO's role and, in fact, the task of Member States are defined by the four major thrusts of ESD: improving quality basic education; reorienting educational programmes; developing public understanding and awareness; and providing training.

ESD has its roots in the history of two distinct areas of interest of the United Nations – education and sustainable development. Many milestones have marked the journey towards sustainable development. While some attention was paid to social and economic issues, the focus was largely on addressing the ecological impact of ever increasing unrestricted development. From the time sustainable development was first endorsed in 1987, the UN General Assembly explored the parallel concept of education to support sustainable development.

Education for Sustainable Development:

- concerns all levels of education and all social contexts (family, school, workplace, community);
- allows learners to acquire the skills, capacities, values and knowledge required to ensure sustainable development
- fosters responsible citizens and promotes democracy by allowing individuals and communities to enjoy their rights and fulfil their responsibilities
- provides essential learning tools and content to allow individuals to survive, to develop to their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. (*World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, 1990, Art. 1, para. 1.*)

Five pillars of ESD

Learning to know

Knowledge, values and skills for respecting and searching for knowledge and wisdom

Learn to learn.
Acquire a taste for learning throughout life.
Develop critical thinking.
Acquire tools for understanding the world.
Understand sustainability concepts and issues.

Learning to be

Knowledge, values and skills for personal and family well-being

See oneself as the main actor in defining positive outcomes for the future.
Encourage discovery and experimentation.
Acquire universally shared values.
Develop one's personality, self-identity, self-knowledge and self-fulfillment.
Be able to act with greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility.

Learning to live together

Knowledge, values and skills for international, intercultural and community cooperation and peace

Participate and cooperate with others in increasingly pluralistic, multi-cultural societies.
Develop an understanding of other people and their histories, traditions, beliefs, values and cultures.
Tolerate, respect, welcome, embrace, and even celebrate difference and diversity in people.
Respond constructively to the cultural diversity and economic disparity found around the world.
Be able to cope with situations of tension, exclusion, conflict, violence, and terrorism.

Learning to do

Knowledge, values and skills for active engagement in productive employment and recreation

Be an actor as well as thinker.
Understand and act on global and local sustainable development issues.
Acquire technical and professional training.
Apply learned knowledge in daily life.
Be able to act creatively and responsibly in one's environment.

Learning to transform one self and society

Knowledge, values and skills for transforming attitudes and lifestyles

Work toward a gender neutral, non-discriminatory society.
Develop the ability and will to integrate sustainable lifestyles for ourselves and others.
Promote behaviours and practices that minimise our ecological footprint on the world around us.
Be respectful of the Earth and life in all its diversity.
Act to achieve social solidarity.
Promote democracy in a society where peace prevails.

1. Learning to know

Knowledge, values and skills for respecting and searching for knowledge and wisdom

- learn to learn
- acquire a taste for learning throughout life
- develop critical thinking
- acquire tools for understanding the world
- understand sustainability concepts and issues

Education for Sustainable Development:

- recognizes the evolving nature of the concept of sustainability.
- reflects the ever growing needs of societies.
- acknowledges that fulfilling local needs often has international effects and consequences.
- addresses content, context, global issues and local priorities.

2. Learning to be

Knowledge, values and skills for personal and family well-being

- see oneself as the main actor in defining positive outcomes for the future
- encourage discovery and experimentation
- acquire universally shared values

- develop one's personality, self-identity, self-knowledge and self-fulfilment
- be able to act with greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility

Education for Sustainable Development:

- builds on the principles and values that underlie sustainable development.
- deals with the well-being of all three realms of sustainability – environment, society, and economy.
- contributes to a person's complete development: mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality.

3. Learning to live together

Knowledge, values and skills for international, intercultural and community cooperation and peace

- participate and co-operate with others in increasingly pluralistic, multi-cultural societies
- develop an understanding of other people and their histories, traditions, beliefs, values and cultures
- tolerate, respect, welcome, embrace, and even celebrate difference and diversity in people
- respond constructively to the cultural diversity and economic disparity found around the world
- be able to cope with situations of tension, exclusion, conflict, violence, and terrorism

Education for Sustainable Development:

- is interdisciplinary. No one discipline can claim ESD for its own, but all disciplines can contribute to it.
- builds civil capacity for community-based decision-making, social tolerance, environmental stewardship, adaptable workforce and quality of life.

4. Learning to do

Knowledge, values and skills for active engagement in productive employment and recreation

- be an actor as well as a thinker
- understand and act on global and local sustainable development issues
- acquire technical and professional training
- apply learned knowledge in daily life
- be able to act creatively and responsibly in one's environment

Education for Sustainable Development:

- is locally relevant and culturally appropriate.
- must become a concrete reality for all our daily decisions and actions.
- is about helping build a sustainable and safe world for everyone.

5. Learning to transform one self and society

Knowledge, values and skills for transforming attitudes and lifestyles

- work toward a gender neutral, non-discriminatory society
- develop the ability and will to integrate sustainable lifestyles for ourselves and others
- promote behaviours and practices that minimise our ecological footprint on the world around us
- be respectful of the Earth and life in all its diversity

- act to achieve social solidarity
- promote democracy in a society where peace prevails

Education for Sustainable Development:

- integrates the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning
- encourages changes in behaviour to create a more viable and fairer society for everyone
- teaches people to reflect critically on their own communities
- empowers people to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future