UNESCO

Roadmap

for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development

Implementation Recommendations
for the United States of America

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Abstract

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. During the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development – UN DESD (2005-2014), a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the United States expanded sustainability efforts across schools, higher education institutions, non-profits, government agencies, industries, and faith communities. In November 2014, UNESCO launched the *Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development* (GAP) at the World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, to extend ESD efforts beyond the UN DESD. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and the UNESCO Education 2030 Framework for Action (Education 2030) also address education for sustainable development, in addition to including targets to promote global citizenship education.

In response, the U.S. ESD delegation of American non-governmental organizations, led by the Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network (GPSEN) - a UN University Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on ESD - the U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development, and other key stakeholders, developed a series of recommendations to increase education, public awareness, and training efforts in the United States to foster a more sustainable future.

With the launch of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, countries have agreed to establish objectives to meet the 17 SDGs. Goal 4 focuses on quality education, with target 4.7 addressing education for sustainable development (ESD). ESD includes key sustainable development issues through participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behavior and take action, consequently promoting competencies like critical thinking, collaborative decision-making, and innovative problem-solving. The following *ESD*

Roadmap and Implementation Recommendations for the United States of America seeks to engage all stakeholders to advance the GAP's five priority action areas in the United States by advancing policies, transforming institutions, building capacity, empowering and engaging youth, and strengthening our local communities.

Introduction

Today's complex challenges require an educated, aware, and skilled citizenry to enact innovative solutions. As stated by Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, in the foreword of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)[1], "the risks and opportunities we face call for a paradigm shift that can only be embedded in our societies through education and learning" (2014). ESD allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. ESD means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behavior and take systemic action for sustainable development. ESD consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way.[2] The GAP priorities seek to advance policies, transform institutions, build capacity, empower and engage youth, and strengthen local communities.

Global Context for Education for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, is "a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. The eradication of poverty in all its forms and

[1] See: UNESCO Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on ESD, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230514e.pdf
[2] See: UNESCO, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-sustainable-development/

dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development."[3] Goal 4 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda strives to ensure quality education for all and, along with the UNESCO Education 2030 Framework for Action (Education 2030)[4], includes targets that address education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCE). With input from stakeholders across the globe, the UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD offers a "roadmap" to identify the goals, objectives, and priority action areas, to focus efforts, inspire participation and commitment, and establish means of implementation and monitoring. UN agencies, member states, non-governmental organizations, academia, private sector entities, and other stakeholders are working to develop frameworks, strategies, and partnerships to support achievement of these visionary goals and targets, within their specific national and regional contexts [See Appendix 1].

ESD in the United States

During the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the United States expanded sustainability programs and initiatives across schools, higher education institutions, non-profits, government agencies, industries, and in faith communities. Extensive efforts were made within the formal and nonformal education sectors to advance education, public awareness, and training for sustainable development. The UN Decade of ESD Final Report (2005-2014)[5] highlights how ESD has made a difference, with ten core accomplishments ranging from institutional change and stakeholder engagement to political leadership and learner-driven pedagogies [See Appendix 1]. Many organizations and institutions in the United

[3] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld
[4] See http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/wef-framework-for-action.pdf
[5] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-world-conference-on-esd-2014/esd-after-2014/desd-final-report/

States address ESD. Their missions and programs are summarized in the supplementary report: "ESD in the United States" (Smith et al. 2015).

Much remains to be done, however. One particular challenge rests in the decentralized education system of the United States. Based upon our federal Constitution, power over education is reserved to the states and local authorities, as well as to individual schools and higher education institutions.[6] In contrast to many other countries, the United States presents a unique narrative with respect to ESD that is inherently led at the local and grassroots level, primarily by representatives of the non-governmental sector and academia. Throughout federal, state, and local governments, ESD efforts are addressed at various levels of authority across a diverse and broad group of agencies.

An example of the state and local autonomy of the U.S. education system and the role of partnerships to support ESD in the United States is the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools, a federal communications and outreach tool structured as a recognition award. Through the award, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) encourages schools to use resources from a variety of federal agencies and national non-profits, as well as to collaborate locally. This is especially important since many federal sustainability resources are not authorized at ED but at federal natural resource and health agencies. In many cases, they are offered by the non-profit and private sectors. ED plays the role of communicator and connector. Schools and districts leverage these nationally available public and private sector resources to build their own organic community partnerships with entities such as local parks, aquariums, farms, museums, and businesses.

The award has been transformational at the state level as well; it asks state education agencies to collaborate across facilities, health, and learning divisions; with state health, environment, and natural resource agencies; and pertinent non-profits. Using a variety of communications and outreach

[6] See http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-org-us.html

tools, ED then highlights the innovative practices of honorees that other schools may implement as well, recognizing that the precise partnerships and resources that make schools' sustainability practices possible will vary from locality to locality. Thus, in the absence of a single national authority over school facilities, health, or learning, a variety of actors are able to accelerate the sustainable schools movement in the United States.

A second challenge rests in higher education. While campus sustainability efforts have been made at colleges and universities across the United States, as documented by organizations such as the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and Second Nature, ESD has yet to be integrated into standards for most disciplines and is not included in the accreditation standards for undergraduate and graduate programs throughout the country. At many campuses, students can still graduate without an understanding of core sustainability concepts and critical issues or the change management and systems-thinking skills necessary to participate in innovative solutions (Rowe, Gentile, and Clevey, 2014). Therefore, higher education institutions are being called upon to help lead the sustainability transformation, in order to train the global citizens and leaders of the future.

It is important to note that aspects of ESD are important to the successful implementation of all 17 SDGs. For example, to achieve sustainable production and consumption targets, we need effective workplace training and consumer education. Similarly, specialists across formal education and nonformal education, in all sectors, will be needed to address specific SDGs from health and energy to climate change and biodiversity. The humanities and social sciences are relevant as well, in addition to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs. These efforts, however, will require critical-thinking, creativity, and collaboration, as well as the motivation necessary to mobilize individuals and communities to create the cultural, structural, and policy changes needed to address the critical issues of our time.

The GAP helps bring particular focus and processes to enable a concerted effort among leaders, organizations, formal and nonformal educators, and learners of all ages to envision a sustainable future through a renewed commitment to people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. Partnership is a core part of Agenda 2030 and Education 2030. Successful implementation of the GAP and expansion of ESD in the United States will require cross-sector partnership models and collaborative strategies that engage appropriate government authorities, are driven at the local, grassroots level, and involve broad, inclusive groups of stakeholders. Success will include the efforts of many stakeholders to:

1) demonstrate expanded implementation of ESD priorities and activities;
2) increase partnerships across sectors and among diverse stakeholders – including government – to reduce duplication in addressing sustainability issues;
3) increase U.S. representation on ESD in international forums such as UNESCO and the United Nations to highlight U.S. models and activities, as well as learn from other country and regional examples.
4) improve reporting to UNESCO and the United Nations on U.S. activities supporting ESD and GCE, including indicators for Education 2030 and Agenda 2030.

Through collaborative approaches to develop and demonstrate ESD practices and processes, we can discover synergies that raise our efficacy and collective impact for achieving a sustainable future.

The next steps are to turn these visions and aspirational goals into actions. As indicated in the GAP commitments already submitted by U.S. delegates [see Appendix 2], these strategies can come in many tangible forms. Curricula clearinghouses, train-the-trainer models, community forums, youth networks, and volunteerism related to sustainability issues are just a few examples. The following recommendations strive to highlight particular goals and objectives that can help achieve the GAP and

SDGs within the United States. It will require collaboration, across agencies and institutions, in neighborhoods and communities, and within our own lives, to achieve these goals. With a short window of opportunity, the time is now to use the potential of ESD to educate, empower, and engage our citizens to build the world we want.

GAP Recommendations

The Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development offers a roadmap for nations and regions to identify their specific needs, resources, and strategies to utilize ESD to create a sustainable future. To guide the process, the GAP identifies five priority action areas for creating a sustainable future through ESD:

1. Advancing policy by mainstreaming ESD
2. Transforming learning and training environments through whole-institution approaches
3. Building capacities of educators and trainers
4. Empowering and mobilizing youth
5. Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level

With these action areas as a foundation, the U.S. ESD delegation of American non-governmental organizations – led by the Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network (GPSEN) – a UN University Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on ESD, the U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development, and other stakeholders - developed a series of recommendations to increase education, public awareness, and training efforts in the United States to foster a more sustainable future. Community members and ESD leaders throughout the nation are invited to develop indicators and metrics and suggest strategies to implement these objectives which meet their own regional and institutional needs.

PRIORITY ACTION AREA 1: Advancing policy

Mainstream ESD into both education and sustainable development policies, to create an enabling environment for ESD and to bring about systemic change

1. Promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in national and state policies, meeting the needs of people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership, in accordance with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and international education declarations, as signed by the United States. In particular:

    a. Address the policy implications of the outcomes from the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (Aichi-Nagoya, 2014), the World Education Forum (Incheon, 2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (New York, 2015), as relevant to education, training, and public awareness campaigns
    b. Establish initiatives and programs that support SDG Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
    c. Align efforts and reporting structures with Goal 4.7, through the advancement of the Global Action Programme on ESD: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development."[7]
    d. Review existing research and reports of national ESD thought leaders to highlight lessons learned and identify next steps [See References]
    e. Engage with existing formal and informal inter-agency networks to establish coordinating bodies and mechanisms to facilitate the GAP, establish targets, assess outcomes, and collaborate with other regional, national, and international centers focused on ESD

2. Achieve legislative and institutional support to reorient educational systems and curricula toward sustainability literacy and principles of ESD

    a. Integrate ESD as a component of all education reform policy initiatives to increase access and retention in quality education, support universal graduation, and benefit from ESD pedagogy
    b. Integrate assessment of student's ESD knowledge and skills into educational standards and academic performance measures at different educational levels
    c. Review current environmental, economic, and cultural literacy standards, plans and practices (e.g., Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan[8], PA Green & Healthy Schools[9]) and identify strategies for integration, implementation and advancement of "sustainability literacy" plans

[7] See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230514e.pdf
[8] See http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/oregon-environmental-literacy-plan.pdf
[9] See http://pagreenschools.org/

d. Work with accreditation bodies for higher education institutions and disciplinary programs to ensure sustainability and ESD language is included in standards
e. Develop indicators, frameworks and processes for educational institutions, governments and educators to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning approaches to determine their effectiveness and efficiency in promoting ESD

3. Work with government agencies to advance ESD by funding workforce training to meet social service and infrastructural development needs

    a. Provide training through the humanities and social sciences to develop skillsets, such as conflict resolution, disaster preparedness, crisis adaptation, poverty alleviation and multicultural awareness, to support community challenges, e.g., violent extremism, climate refugees, etc.
    b. Support sustainable energy policies, planning and implementation through funding of training programs, STEM initiatives and projects that foster innovation for a sustainable energy future

4. Increase engagement of citizens in policy discussions, design and implementation
    a. Develop programs which help students and the public learn civil discourse and policy engagement across political spectrums to produce shared understandings, visions, and actions for a sustainable future
    b. Include youth and underserved communities on advisory boards, enabled with the power to enact change, to ensure their active involvement in policy planning, implementation and evaluation to shape policies to strengthen ESD

5. Dedicate public and private funding, recognition, high-level backing and leadership to enable implementation of sustainable development-related policies

    a. Expand resource availability and grant-funding for research in ESD, including in formal and nonformal education
    b. Enable diverse ESD approaches and experimentation across disciplines and sectors in order to test and scale up the impact of successful learning approaches and meet varying regional needs and challenges within their geographic and institutional contexts
    c. Develop certification and reporting structures to identify, replicate and adapt successful practices, increase scale and efficiencies by leveraging resources, and help advise policies, e.g., Maryland Green Schools[10] and Sustainable Jersey for Schools[11]

[10] See http://maeoe.org/green-schools/
[11] See http://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/

PRIORITY ACTION AREA 2: Transforming learning and training environments

Integrate sustainability principles into education and training settings

1. Identify whole-institution and systems approaches and lessons learned through the UN Decade on ESD and support the Global Action Programme on ESD by building on UNDESD accomplishments and challenges, recognizing the value of advancing ESD within agencies, institutions, and organizations [See References]

2. Integrate ESD best practices into the operations of institutions

    a. Model sustainability values and practices in operations by promoting sustainable lifestyles, consumption and production, and building design and use
    b. Address energy and infrastructure needs by promoting energy efficiency, increasing use of renewable energy technologies that pay for themselves and produce jobs, and advancing energy literacy through curricula and public awareness campaigns
    c. Call for sustainability knowledge and skillsets in job descriptions and annual performance evaluations, to institutionalize sustainability through Human Resource practices in all employment areas
    d. Emphasize civic responsibility, ethics, and skill building of all leaders, educators, staff and students
    e. Engage leaders, educators, staff, students and community members in sustainable operational practices, including learning about and engaging in issues related to energy, food, water, waste and biodiversity

3. Collaborate with existing organizations that support whole institution approaches and create new mechanisms, as necessary

    a. Build upon the success of sustainability models for schools, such as the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools program, the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council, the Cloud Institute, the National Wildlife Federation, and Shelburne Farms
    b. Advance efforts in higher education institutions through national and international sustainability networks, including the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), Second Nature, the Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium (HEASC), and the Disciplinary Associations Network for Sustainability (DANS), along with their assessment tools: STARS[12]; the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment[13] and related Climate Action Plans; and the International Sustainability Literacy Test, plus ESD resources, such as the Climate Resiliency Toolkit, the Green Genome assessment, and other resources from the Sustainability Education and Economic Development (SEED) Center at the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

[12] See https://stars.aashe.org/
[13] See http://secondnature.org/

c. Work with teacher education professional organizations such as Kappa Delta Pi (KDP), the American Association of Colleges for Education (AACTE), The National Network of Education Renewal (NNER), and the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) to engage Colleges of Education Deans, faculty and education students in the work of ESD

4. Orient institutional practices toward meeting campus and community needs, through engaged partnerships with stakeholders

    a. Enhance collaboration and collective action within sustainability initiatives to support joint efforts of students, instructors, staff, leaders, businesses, and local communities, through the development of common visions, identities, projects and programs which are shared among all stakeholders
    b. Develop inter- and trans-disciplinary outreach and engagement efforts to highlight how all disciplines can advise and contribute to education related to social, economic, and environmental sustainability issues
    c. Empower youth to lead sustainability initiatives and projects on their campuses and in their communities, with the mandates, institutional support, mechanisms, resources and recognition necessary to be successful
    d. Increase resiliency within local and national communities by connecting higher education institutions and disciplines to applied research, problem-solving, and trainings that address regional challenges, national security issues and disaster-preparedness needs
    e. Work with faith communities to advance programs that not only transform their buildings and properties to reflect principles of sustainability, but serve as an example to inspire members to make changes in their homes, lifestyles, and the wider community, and engage community members through lecture series, youth programs, etc. (e.g. see Interfaith Power and Light[14]; Green Faith[15], and Blessed Tomorrow[16]
    f. Host events that foster collaboration across sectors, institutions and organizations, allow for participation of all stakeholders, and increase public awareness, ownership, and engagement within ESD initiatives

[14] See http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/about/mission-history/
[15] See http://www.greenfaith.org/about/mission-and-areas-of-focus
[16] See http://blessedtomorrow.org/

PRIORITY ACTION AREA 3: Building capacities of educators and trainers

Increase the capacities of educators and trainers to more effectively deliver ESD

1. Recognize trends and successful practices in education (curricula, skill building, on-line education, etc.) in the context of ESD and develop professional development programs in various modalities that build upon the competencies of educators and trainers at all levels of formal and nonformal education systems for achieving progress toward sustainable development

    a. Work with formal education, industry and nonprofit partners, to develop a robust resource clearinghouse that brings together existing curricula and professional materials, assesses their quality, and makes them readily available for teachers and teacher educators, e.g, the American Library Association's RTSustain initiatives
    b. Create guidelines for development of ESD materials and evaluation of existing ESD materials

2. Work with national, state and local education agencies and boards to create model policy and standards based on ESD best practices for teachers and students

    a. Develop national models of ESD education programs for new teachers, as well as the professional development of existing teachers and non-teaching staff on ESD, in order to institutionalize key ESD skillsets within teacher education systems
    b. Coordinate with Council of Chief State School Officers to embed ESD in teacher education, building on existing strengths, e.g., the State of Washington's Environmental and Sustainability Learning Standards[17], the accompanying Professional Educator Standards, and the Cloud Education for Sustainability Standards & Performance Indicators[18]
    c. Highlight existing programs and establish more sustainability related credentialing of Career Technical Education (CTE)/Technical Vocational Educational Training (TVET) programs and sustainability professionals

3. Collaborate with national and regional organizations to develop and offer trainings and programs to build capacities among formal and nonformal educators

    a. Offer regional and national train-the-trainer workshops via webinars, conferences, etc. to increase sustainability knowledge and capacities, within and across disciplines, for teachers in primary, secondary, and higher education
    b. Create formal and nonformal professional development modules on ESD for teachers, students, and community leaders on relevant ESD skillsets, e.g., critical thinking, civil discourse, innovative teaching and learning techniques, ways to shape spheres of influence, and community-based learning and research

[17] See http://www.k12.wa.us/environmentSustainability/Standards/default.aspx
[18] See http://cloudinstitute.org/cloud-efs-standards/

c. Insure quality workforce training through CTE/TVET programs by providing adequate public and private funding sources and professional development opportunities to address the sustainability needs of today and the future

4. Increase opportunities to advance research on ESD to address community and national needs

    a. Partner with federally supported entities, such as the National Endowment for the Humanities, Academy of Science, and National Science Foundation, to create and fund meaningful ESD research projects
    b. Share findings with communities and other stakeholders through research reports, conference and community presentations, and published articles in scholarly journals and mainstream media that can inform industries, academic communities, and policy-makers

5. Ensure inclusion of all sectors and demographics, including traditionally underrepresented communities, to scale up efforts and reach beyond traditional educational institutions

    a. Empower and mobilize youth, life-long learners, professionals, practitioners, and citizens across all levels and sectors to serve as ESD peer educators and trainers
    b. Develop new methods, technologies and approaches of ESD-based education, as well as supportive mechanisms such as online trainings and forums, toolkits, funds, peer-to-peer learning and support networks to engage underserved communities
    c. Develop learner-centered strategies, culturally responsive pedagogies, high leverage teaching practices, and the development of a critical consciousness to support ESD, especially within underserved and underrepresented communities
    d. Encourage the development of intercultural exchanges in a variety of contexts of ESD in order to foster multicultural understanding, ethics of peace, and global citizenship, with active inclusion of indigenous communities

PRIORITY ACTION AREA 4: Empowering and mobilizing youth

Multiply ESD actions among youth

1. Empower youth as important stakeholders and change agents of ESD and involve young people in the planning, implementation and assessment of ESD programs

    a. Have governments, civil society organizations, youth councils, communities and businesses allocate financial, technical and human resources to engage youth as change agents and enable the implementation of ESD policies and the recommendations of the [UNESCO World Conference on ESD Youth Declaration [See Appendix 3]

2. Encourage and support youth and educators to increase educational opportunities within their schools, institutions and communities

    a. Experiment with innovative teaching and learning approaches, allowing for alternative technologies as well as creative and experiential methods to break through conventional mindsets and nurture varying learning styles
    b. Partner with community organizations to develop volunteer and internship opportunities that advance ESD learning objectives and address real-world problems

3. Develop youth networks that facilitate collaboration, scale up efforts, leverage resources, and increase collective impact

    a. Build regional networks at the K-12 and college/university levels to facilitate partnerships, research, mentoring, and articulation between institutions to advance ESD
    b. Connect US youth-focused efforts with international youth organizations and networks that focus on sustainable development, building on existing frameworks, such as the Global RCE Youth Network[19] , the International Youth Database[20] and the Students Organizing for Sustainability Initiative[21]
    c. Create international sustainability exchanges, such as study-abroad programs and virtual "pen pal" programs to encourage inter-cultural communication, literacy, and engagement

4. Develop and reinforce programs and supportive measures for underserved and vulnerable youth, including youth with special needs or disabilities, ensuring a sustainable future for all

[19] See https://www.facebook.com/RCEYouth
[20] See http://internationalyouthcouncil.com/profile/JamieAnsorge
[21] See http://sosnetwork.groupsite.com/main/summary

PRIORITY ACTION AREA 5: Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level

At the community level, scale up ESD programmes and multi-stakeholder ESD networks

1. Facilitate partnerships across sectors with community groups that emphasize environmental, economic, and social sustainability to discover synergies, build relationships, and promote models that recognize and support collaboration and interdependence

    a. Support the scaling up of multi-sector collaborative models, such as the Regional Centers of Expertise (RCE) on ESD, to facilitate community engagement and increase non-formal education opportunities[22]
    b. Work with educational institutions, industries, civil society organizations, and governments to identify how ESD offers strong foundations for economic and social well-being within local communities, as well as protecting the environment
    c. Create incentives and recognition opportunities for communities to implement more sustainable practices and highlight exemplary projects and individuals

2. Address issues of social equity and justice in local communities through social inclusion of marginalized groups in ESD efforts

    a. Recognize changing political and demographic influences of different communities of color
    b. Connect ESD efforts with existing multi-cultural initiatives or partnerships, e.g., the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' Latinos for a Sustainable Future and the Center for Diversity and the Environment

3. Work with community groups to advance nonformal education, training, and public awareness opportunities

    a. Increase resiliency, through disaster-preparedness training
    b. Advance applied skillsets through volunteerism and civic engagement projects
    c. Support opportunities for community-based participatory research and citizen science, e.g., partner with STEM programs

4. Encourage the engagement and respect the voices of youth within their communities

    a. Advance an ethos of global citizenship and develop skillsets for civic engagement
    b. Create mechanisms that allow youth to be involved in the identification, design, and implementation of ESD-related community problems and solutions, including developing youth-led ESD initiatives in local communities

[22] There currently are four active RCEs in the United States: Grand Rapids, Michigan, Portland, Oregon, Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, and Burlington, Vermont.

c. Offer opportunities for youth to engage in applied learning, civic engagement, and real-life problem-solving, such as service-learning, transdisciplinary education and research, living laboratories, on-line education and learning centers

Conclusion

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Education 2030 Framework for Action provide aspirational visions and guidance to create:

> a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. The eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development... The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda… They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.[23]

The GAP's Priority Action Areas offer us a roadmap to achieve these goals through education for sustainable development. They are an opportunity to address core objectives, align initiatives, and share proven successful practices to help meet the needs of our regions, our country, and beyond. Stakeholders are invited to review the GAP, develop strategic plans, and establish indicators and metrics to evaluate their progress. Our urgent, shared sustainability challenges require partnerships, bold steps, resilience and persistence. Many current and future beings depend on our affirmation that a better world is possible. Thus, we must move forward, quickly.

Yet, none of us can do this alone. As Dr. Charles Hopkins, UNESCO Chair in Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability, at York University, in Toronto, Canada, recommends, we

[23] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

can achieve a new level of success by using collaborative processes such as the Strengths Model. This transformative model highlights several core assertions for how all stakeholders can contribute:

1. No one can do it all; no organization, institution, nor individual can do everything.
2. Everyone can do something.
3. We need innovative leaders to step forward to build interdisciplinary and interdependent approaches.
4. We need policy-makers, funders, and infrastructure to support the work (McKeown, 2002).

With this combination of shared support, a more sustainable world is possible. We just need to determine how.

At this moment in history, new partnerships and alternative strategies need to be established. The ESD community can grow to create a future where an aware and educated populace can co-exist together in a world that meets not only our own needs, but also the needs of other species and future generations. While the challenges we face are daunting, it is also an opportunity for innovation, hope, greater well-being and interdependence, and the development of skillsets and mindsets necessary to create a better world.

Appendix 1

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Resources

UN Decade of ESD Final Report Summary (2005-2014)

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) shapes communities, through raising consciousness, inspiring innovation, and promoting behavioral change and civic engagement. According to the UN Decade of ESD Final Report (2005-2014), ESD helps "shape the future we want" in the following ten key ways:

- Enables sustainable development
  1) Education systems are addressing sustainability issues
  2) Sustainable development agendas and education agendas are converging
- Importance of stakeholder engagement
  3) Political leadership has proven instrumental
  4) Multi-stakeholder partnerships are particularly effective
  5) Local commitments are growing
- Galvanizes pedagogical innovation
  6) Whole-institution approaches
  7) Facilitates interactive, learner-driven pedagogies
- Spreading across all levels and areas of education
  8) Being integrated into formal education
  9) Non-formal and informal ESD is increasing
  10) Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) advances sustainable development

UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD

UNESCO launched the new Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD, in 2014. Countries and RCEs are asked to help implement the GAP, using the UNESCO Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on ESD, with five Priority Action Areas:

1. Advancing policy by mainstreaming ESD
2. Transforming learning and training environments through whole-institution approaches
3. Building capacities of educators and trainers
4. Empowering and mobilizing youth
5. Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level

UN's Sustainable Development Goals

(Adopted September 25, 2015)

Preamble

This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognise that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what these did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.

The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet:

People We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

Planet We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

Prosperity We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

Peace We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Partnership We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

Our vision

In these Goals and targets, we are setting out a supremely ambitious and transformational vision. We envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive. We envisage a world free of fear and violence. A world with universal literacy. A world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, to health care and social protection, where physical, mental and social well-being are assured. A world where we reaffirm our commitments regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and where there is improved hygiene; and where food is sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious. A world where human habitats are safe, resilient and sustainable and where there is universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy.

We envisage a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; of respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. A world which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation. A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed. A just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met. 9.

We envisage a world in which every country enjoys sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all. A world in which consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources – from air to land, from rivers, lakes and aquifers to oceans and seas - are sustainable. One in which democracy, good governance and the rule of law as well as an enabling environment at national and international levels, are essential for sustainable development, including sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger. One in which development and the application of technology are climate-sensitive, respect biodiversity and are resilient. One in which humanity lives in harmony with nature and in which wildlife and other living species are protected.

Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy 15

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

Appendix 2

U.S. Delegation UNESCO GAP Commitments

Countries and organizations around the world were invited to submit GAP commitments to highlight particular actions that they plan to achieve in the coming five years. The U.S. Partnership for ESD, RCE Greater Portland, and the International Network for Teacher Education Institutions, associated with the UNESCO Chair on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability, have submitted the following commitments.

US Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development

All four commitments included the following organizational profile:

The US Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development (USP) has over 400 partner organizations and is most active in creating national sustainability education initiatives in formal education for youth and adults. It also reports on and shares resources about sustainability education within the communities, youth, business and interfaith sectors of the US. While the USP has created academic association networks that have been partners on grants of about one million US$, the core efforts of the USP are all provided pro bono by the board, the staff, the network partners, and the USP Fellows.

Commitment #1 – Action Area 5: Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level

The USP wants to help US education increase its use of project based learning. We are planning to work with other national sustainability organizations such as AASHE and our national network HEASC (Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium) to collect and publish documents that highlight community based sustainability projects that help students become literate about our sustainability challenges and engaged in creating local solutions. We plan in the first year to disseminate through our networks to over 400,000 faculty information on how they can assign projects that will help create local solutions. In the second year, we plan to make these faculties aware of the international research already available on quality practices for local engagement in sustainability solutions as a key pedagogy. After the second year, we will assess progress and design steps for the following years.

We plan to utilize the full-time efforts of our USP President, and pro bono efforts of our USP Board to accomplish the above. In addition, we plan to expand our present pro bono list of USP Fellows to include community project-based education-focused Fellows. Staff within our academic disciplinary associations, such as the USP's Disciplinary Associations Network for Sustainability (DANS)[24], will be assisting us in information dissemination and faculty engagement. We hope UNESCO will

[24] See www.aashe.org/dans

inform us about any new initiatives on this topic occurring in other countries so we can add to our knowledge of quality practices.

Commitment #2 – Action Area 1: Advancing Policy

The USP has created an initiative for US colleges and universities called Campus and Course Conversations, where students and the public learn civil discourse across the political spectrum, producing an understanding of the areas of shared vision for a sustainable future. The first conversation we created focuses on the benefits of renewable energies and energy efficiency and includes action steps where participants ask their elected and state officials to complete Clean Power Plans that will reduce greenhouse gases by increasing the use of energy efficiency and renewable energies. We are planning to work with our national networks HEASC and DANS to get the engagement of at least 50 colleges in these Conversations in the first year and double that number in the second year. After this, we will assess progress and design steps for the following years to ramp up throughout the US.

We plan to utilize the full time efforts of our USP President, and pro bono efforts of our USP Board and staff to accomplish the above. In addition, we plan to expand our present pro bono list of USP Fellows to include Fellows focused specifically on increasing civic engagement and policy advocacy for greenhouse gas reductions, clean energy implementation and other key social, environmental and economic sustainability policies. Staff within our academic disciplinary and student life associations (see participating associations at www.aashe.org/dans and www.aashe.org/heasc) will be assisting us in information dissemination and faculty engagement.

Commitment #3 – Action Area 3: Building capacities of educators and trainers

The USP wants all students to be willing and able to help create solutions to our global sustainability challenges. In the first and second year, we plan to expand our networks of education associations to a combined reach of over 500,000 educators, and make sure all associations are disseminating information on sustainability teaching resources. In the first three years, we will encourage assessments of sustainability curricular efforts in at least 500 higher education institutions, using the International Sustainability Test and other assessment tools. In the fourth year, we will use results to call for/assist systemic improvements in teaching/learning sustainability with an emphasis on real world problem solving in US colleges and universities.

We plan to utilize the full time efforts of our USP President, and pro bono efforts of our USP Board to accomplish the above. In addition, we plan to expand our present pro bono list of USP Fellows to help with these efforts. Finally, the staffs within our associations in our networks are committed to continuing the work of providing ESD teaching resources to their members and to disseminate information on both assessment and continuous improvement. We would like to learn more about efforts, lessons learned and teaching/assessment resources available from other countries and hope UNESCO will continue to be a communications conduit to share best practices and help create collaborations for both educational resources and civic engagement opportunities for necessary policies for a sustainable future.

Commitment #4 – Action Area 4: Empowering and mobilizing youth

The USP wants to help US students connect with youth internationally to collaboratively call for a sustainable future and to create a call for transparency on progress toward sustainability from governments, education institutions and key businesses such as energy companies. We plan in the first year to share information on international youth networking opportunities through our existing networks of national education associations including student life organizations. In the second year, we plan to reach out to US student organizations (e.g. student government, honor associations and fraternities/sororities) and engage them in international collaborative youth empowerment activities.

After the second year, we will assess progress and design steps for the following year. We plan to utilize the full time efforts of our USP President, and pro bono efforts of our USP Board to accomplish the above. In addition, we plan to expand our present pro bono list of USP Fellows to include youth focused Fellows. We also plan to collaborate with Portland's RCE on these efforts. Staff within each of our student affairs/student life associations will be assisting in these efforts. We hope UNESCO will inform us about youth networks in other countries that we might connect with to create a more unified and international voice for a sustainable future.

RCE Greater Portland

RCE Greater Portland, aka the Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network (GPSEN), is a multi-sector network of colleges, schools, educators, students, non-profits, political and industry leaders, organizations, and community members collaborating to promote sustainability education in the Portland Metro region, including four counties in Oregon and Washington, in the United States. We develop collaborative partnerships, support outreach, and offer formal, non-formal, and informal educational and research opportunities that leverage our region's talents and resources to help us all increase our collective impact to achieve a more sustainable future.

<u>Commitment #1 - Action Area 4: Empowering and Mobilizing Youth</u>
Youth Networks are being developed at the high school and college levels. The high school students will collaborate across schools to participate in this year's Global Virtual Youth Conference, in May, 2015, and to develop continuing projects together that support community engagement through the PLACE program, which will have a new center built by summer, 2016.

The college students are developing a network to support networking between colleges, shared sponsorship of student forums and trainings, collaborative research and service projects, and articulation between the community colleges and universities. Planning meetings began in December, 2014 and will continue into the spring, with projects beginning in the fall. One suggested event is a Change Agent training, through the Be the Change Foundation.

The high school network is a collaboration between the Portland Public School and Rex Putnam Public School districts and a private high school, Catlin Gable. Catlin Gable has a successful PLACE program, which supports community engagement for youth. These students will build the foundation of the program, with support through their institutions, which will offer opportunities for future students.

The college network is a collaborative project between Portland Community College, Portland State University, Lewis & Clark College, and University of Portland. Funding has not been required at this point, but will be requested through student governments for future events.

Commitment #2 - Action Area 5: Local Solutions

With Metro Grant funding:

1. Use an "ecosystem analysis" approach to identify and engage a broad diversity of conservation education constituents and leaders and identify constituent leaders (early childhood, K-12, post-secondary education, business and industry, sustainability, STEM, "green" jobs, nonformal education, government, food/agriculture, tribal, camps, environmental/social justice, etc.). (Spring 2015)
2. Meet with constituent leaders to identify their priorities and draft a common regional agenda. (Summer 2015)
3. Host regional gathering(s) to build team cohesion through equity, diversity and inclusion training; refine common agenda (Fall 2016).
4. Establish asset map of conservation networks and providers (Winter 2016)
5. Develop and implement an inclusive, lasting regional conservation education leadership model that represents a diverse cross-sector network.

With funding from our regional government, we will hire a Regional Coordinator to manage all activities of this two-year project. She will collaborate with regional networks, including GPSEN, the Intertwine Alliance, the Center for Diversity and the Environment, and the Coalition for Communities of Color. Part-time funding will be provided for the GPSEN Coordinator to help with outreach efforts. The established relationships will be embedded in a diverse cross-sector network of individuals and organizations working together to build a healthy, just, and thriving Portland-Metro region.

Commitment #3 - Action Area 5: Local Solutions

RCE Greater Portland received the global RCE Civic Engagement award for their Hands on Greater Portland's E4 TeamWorks project, in which twelve students and community members participated in a series of events focused on the four "Es" of sustainability: Education; Environment; Economy; and Equity, in the spring of 2014. We will continue this project in 2015, serving meals to the hungry, supporting an organization that weatherizes low income homes, beautifying an elementary school, reclaiming building material, and attending a lecture on sustainable development. Reflection exercises will be embedded in the projects to help participants explore local sustainability challenges, identify and assess existing initiatives, and recognize the benefits of their actions.

Hands On Greater Portland, a network committed to community engagement in the Portland region, developed the TeamWorks model in order to deepen the engagement of community member in service projects. The intention is for participants to learn the structural and cultural foundations of why citizens should address social, economic, and environmental issues and how they can make a difference. RCE Greater Portland Coordinator and Portland Community College Sociology Instructor, Kim Smith, serves as the Team Leader and organizes the TeamWorks' learning objectives. Hands On Greater Portland's TeamWorks Coordinator, Melia Tichenor, schedules all of the service projects with established partners, based on the E4 themes. Partners include the Rebuilding Center, the Community

Energy Project, Potluck in the Park, and local school districts. No resources are required for this project, beyond staff capacity and volunteer time.

International Network of Teacher Education Institutions associated with the UNESCO Chair on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability

This international network of teacher education institutions has participants in more than 70 Member States. The UNESCO Chair on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability at York University in Toronto Canada is the convener of this international network. The Chairholder and Secretariat are dedicated year-round staff. Project assistants work periodically as needed. The Chair carries out a variety of professional development activities for leaders in the formal education system and responds to numerous requests for speakers on ESD around the world. The Chairholder, Secretariat and IN members conduct research, publish and deliver in-service professional development on ESD regularly.

Commitment #1 – Action Area 1: Advancing Policy and Action Area #3: Building Capacities of Educators

Each member TEI of the INTEI is committed to forming a national network of TEIs or mentoring another TEI to advance ESD. We expect that the number of TEIs actively pursuing ESD to double in two years and to quadruple in 5 years. We will support TEI activity in ESD with publications and forums to share ideas. We know from experience that we will need to work with the coordinating forum and key partners in both priority action area (1) Advancing policy related to teacher education in addition to our focus priority action area (3) educators. Change related to teacher education takes work on many fronts: programmes, practices and policies. We know pathways to institutionalize ESD in TEIs so that the change endures.

Appendix 3

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Education for Sustainable Development 2014
World Conference, Aichi-Nagoya, 10-12 November
Stakeholder Meetings, Okayama, 4-8 November

UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development
Stakeholder Meeting

UNESCO ESD YOUTH CONFERENCE

7 November 2014 • Okayama, Japan

YOUTH STATEMENT

This Youth Statement was adopted at the UNESCO ESD Youth Conference held in Okayama, Japan, on 7 November 2014, to provide a vision, commitment, and recommendations from youth for advancing ESD beyond 2014 in line with the Global Action Programme on ESD. It represents the voices of 50 ESD youth leaders in the conference, who in turn represent thousands of young people around the globe, and also includes contributions from over a hundred youth who participated in pre-conference online discussions.

Vision for a Sustainable Future

We invite you to take a moment as you read this statement to hold in your heart your loved ones: your children, their children and those that will follow. Imagine – as we have – how the decisions that we make today will impact each and every one of them. Reflect – as we have – on the importance and value of this youth statement to their lives, as well as to ours.

Our statement captures the voices and visions of thousands of youth from around the world who are strongly represented and have widely contributed to this global call – from the experiences of an environmental educator in Madagascar, to the creative approaches of a biomimic in Bahrain; from empowering indigenous youth in Thailand to innovating with gaming platforms in Moldova. Our journeys are different, yet our destination is the same. We come from different backgrounds – a rich diversity of race, colour, religion and belief – yet our vision is one. Our voices are united.

Together, we stand for a sustainable, resilient and equitable society in which every person in every corner of the world has the opportunity to thrive. We strongly believe that Education for Sustainable

Development (ESD) is fundamental to achieving this vision. ESD provides the empowering mechanism through which we can transform the critical sustainability challenges that we face into opportunities. It must be the essence of education. Without ESD we cannot move forward.

Young people play a vital role in advancing the ESD agenda. The implications of our collective decisions and actions will shape our reality and our future. We are committed to lead, yet we cannot do this alone, and neither can you. **Together, we must empower and mobilize youth around the globe!** This document presents our strategic recommendations to achieve this, building on the UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.

We urgently call for a multi-stakeholder commitment to and collaboration on these recommendations. We acknowledge and celebrate the existing efforts of the frontrunners who have led us this far. For many of us, the journey has already begun. For those just starting, we invite you to come with us.

Recommendations

1. POLICY ADVANCEMENT

a) **Ensure the active involvement of youth in policy planning, implementation and evaluation.** Youth should be recognized as a key stakeholder at all levels, domains and stages of educational governance. Through this, youth will be able to shape policies to strengthen ESD.
b) **Ensure that policies drive ESD with the urgency it requires and in a holistic, just and gender responsive way.** Policies should address the multiple dimensions of sustainable development and drive immediate action to realize sustainable development in the here and now.
c) **All relevant stakeholders should allocate resources to empower youth as change agents for ESD.** Governments, civil society organizations, youth councils, communities and businesses should allocate financial, technical and human resources to enable the implementation of ESD policies and the recommendations of this declaration.

2. WHOLE-INSTITUTION APPROACHES

a) **Educational institutions and governments should provide the institutional support, resources and legitimacy for youth-led change processes towards sustainability.** This requires a combination of bottom-up initiatives and top-down steering. Mechanisms should include dedicated funding, institutional integration, working space, mandates, recognition, and training for youth-led sustainability initiatives.
b) **Enhance collective action among sustainability initiatives.** Educational institutions should support the joint efforts of pupils, students, staff and the local community. This requires the development of common visions and identities, places of encounter, projects and programmes which are shared among all stakeholders.
c) **Recognize youth as equal partners to accelerate the operational transformation of educational institutions towards sustainability.** Educational institutions should practice what they teach, by

generating positive environmental impacts. In collaboration with staff, youth should become change agents and decision-makers in environmental management, including issues of energy, food, water, waste, buildings and biodiversity on campus.

3. EDUCATORS AND TRAINERS

a) **Recognize that all citizens have the potential and responsibility to act as facilitators for ESD.** To educate billions of people on sustainability challenges and opportunities, the mobilization of educators and trainers needs to reach beyond those in traditional educational institutions. Youth, professionals, practitioners and citizens across all levels and sectors need to be mobilized as ESD educators and trainers.
b) **Build capacities of youth as trainers and peer-to-peer educators for ESD.** Youth should be empowered to educate a critical mass of peers, parents, friends and communities on ESD. This requires special support and attention from professional trainers and educational institutions.
c) **Enhance the capacity of existing educators and trainers to empower youth to engage on ESD issues.** Teachers, educators and trainers need to learn about the new methods, technologies and approaches of ESD-based education. This requires supportive mechanisms such as online trainings and forums, toolkits, funds, peer-to-peer learning and support networks.

4. INNOVATIVE LEARNING FOR YOUTH

a) **Educational institutions and governments should encourage and support youth and educators to experiment with innovative learning approaches.** ESD is different from traditional education. It thus requires experimentation with alternative technologies as well as creative and experiential methods to break through conventional mindsets and find the best ways to educate youth.
b) **Monitor and evaluate these learning approaches to determine their effectiveness and efficiency in promoting ESD.** Educational institutions, governments and educators need to develop indicators, frameworks and processes to evaluate the diversity of experiments with ESD in order to identify what works in different institutional and geographic settings.
c) **Scale the impact of successful learning approaches to different geographic and institutional contexts.** Successful learning approaches need to be de-contextualised and codified, in order to be then replicated across geographic locations, increased in scale and integrated into mainstream policies. Dedicated funding, recognition, high-level backing and leadership are key to realizing all three of the above recommendations.

5. LOCAL COMMUNITIES

a) **Respect the voices of youth in community-driven ESD initiatives.** International agencies, governments and civil society organizations should respect the voices of youth when implementing ESD initiatives in communities. This requires that youth are involved in the identification, design and implementation of ESD-related community problems and solutions.
b) **Support youth-led ESD initiatives in local communities.** ESD forms a strong foundation for the economic growth of local communities and the protection of ecosystems. Realizing this potential

requires training, mentoring and sponsorship of youth-led ESD initiatives, supported by educational institutions, companies, civil society organizations and governments.
c) **Encourage youth to engage with and learn through real-life situations.** Local communities should be positively impacted by ESD and provide a source of learning and inspiration. This requires promoting social service-learning, transdisciplinary education and research, living laboratories, learning centers and online education.

6. SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

a) **Enable all youth to understand and critically appreciate the complexities and uncertainties of sustainability challenges and opportunities.** In order to undertake effective action on ESD, young people need to understand the interconnected socio-cultural, economic and technological systems and trends that create persistent sustainability problems.
b) **Empower youth to develop visions of more sustainable futures.** Through dialogue and facilitated interactions, young learners need to be supported in developing daring, radical and challenging visions of a more sustainable world. Those visions then provide the inspiration and rationales for youth-led sustainability efforts.
c) **Equip students with the competencies to transform their personal lives, educational institutions, communities and countries.** To realize their sustainability visions, youth need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and values for transforming themselves and the unsustainable systems in their society. Encouragement, feedback and recognition from educators, peers and educational institutions are necessary to strengthen their confidence and motivation along the journey.

7. WOMEN AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS

a) **Ensure that educational curricula and policies drive ESD in a way that enhances the equality and equity of socially marginalized groups.** Socially marginalized groups are vulnerable and difficult to reach through ESD activities, as they are discriminated against for reasons of gender, age, ability, colour, religion, income, geographic origin and sexual orientation, among others.
b) **Recognize the values, experiences and perspectives of youth from marginalized social groups for ESD.** Youth from marginalized social groups can provide unique, relevant and interesting values, experiences and perspectives to the education of mainstream and privileged students. Sharing those requires intercultural, interfaith and intergenerational dialogue to create mutual understanding and acceptance.
c) **Create safe and accessible learning spaces for youth from marginalized social groups.** Specific conditions need to be put in place for empowering youth from marginalized social groups to participate in ESD activities. This requires, among others, deconstructing stereotypes and providing financial support and facilitated encounters.

8. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

a) **Recognize the importance of social entrepreneurship to contribute to the goals of ESD.** Governments and educational institutions should recognize that social entrepreneurship enables

young people to learn about ESD in an informal setting, to create jobs, set up their own ESD activities, and have positive impacts on their local communities.
b) **Create favourable policy and funding conditions for new social start-ups.** In order to realize the potential of social entrepreneurship to contribute to ESD, governments and financial institutions need to provide subsidies, tax allowances, scholarships, guidance and mentoring schemes to support young entrepreneurs.
c) **Develop the capacity of youth to set up and manage their social enterprises.** Educational institutions, businesses and civil society organizations should foster the entrepreneurial knowledge, awareness and skills of youth. This requires dedicated courses, peer-to-peer coaching, mentoring, start-up funding and office space, among others.

Youth Empowering and Mobilizing Youth

Across the globe, youth are increasingly mobilizing themselves and taking leadership roles to advance their communities and countries towards sustainability. In this process, young people recognize that creating a sustainable future will require a collective vision, commitment and action from youth around the world. Therefore, youth-to-youth empowerment and mobilization present a unique opportunity for harnessing the knowledge, energy and creativity of young people to advance ESD.

Young leaders on ESD can be inspirational role models for encouraging other youth who share similar concerns in their local contexts. This can be achieved through peer mentoring, sharing of knowledge and skills, and fostering open and safe platforms for expression and action in their communities and beyond.

A critical element of successfully mobilizing youth is building trust and reducing conflict. Stimulating international and intercultural dialogue amongst youth fosters friendship, exchanges, understanding and cooperation among cultures, generations and people with different worldviews. Youth recognition of diversity as an opportunity contributes to advancing ESD at local, national and global levels.

Youth-to-youth empowerment initiatives have the potential to be bold and creative in the way they tell stories and mobilize others. It is here that other stakeholders can harness and partner with the creativity, passion and dedication of young people. In this way, youth-to-youth initiatives can continue growing, spreading the message and creating more impact.

We, the youth of the world, commit to taking responsibility for empowering and mobilizing young people. We are dedicated to using this collective driving force to maximize positive impact on our society and environment. With this role as change makers, we are ready to do our part in transforming today's world for a more sustainable future.

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