



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2005–2014)



UNESCO STRATEGY

FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE
OF EDUCATION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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KEY ACTION THEMES FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE DESD (2010-2015)

In the 2nd half of the DESD, UNESCO will support Member States and other stakeholders in addressing global sustainable development challenges through ESD, by focusing on the following three priorities :

- **climate change**
- **biodiversity**
- **disaster risk reduction
and preparedness**



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INTRODUCTION

The UNESCO Strategy for the Second Half of the United Nations (UN) Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) draws on the findings and lessons learnt from the first phase of the DESD monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process (as reflected in the 2009 DESD M&E report *Learning for a Sustainable World: Review of Contexts and Structures for Education for Sustainable Development*,¹ (see also document 35 C/54). It also builds on the UNESCO World Conference on ESD and the Bonn Declaration (see Annex 2 and document 181 EX/INF.15) as well as on the outcomes of other key international ESD meetings (see documents 179 EX/INF.4 Rev., 180 EX/5 (Part IX) and 181 EX/5 Add.1). The Bonn Declaration gives particular emphasis to the importance of education for the global development agenda and underlines the essential contribution of ESD to shaping the purpose, content and quality of all education. The UNESCO strategy will be implemented in line with the International Implementation Scheme (IIS), which, along with the Bonn Declaration, will provide the global strategic framework for UNESCO and its DESD partners during the second half of the Decade.

The Strategy takes into account key DESD regional challenges² and opportunities. It is also shaped by the shared vision of education emerging from the four 2008-2009 UNESCO international education conferences (see documents 35 C/INF.16 and 35 C/INF.28 Rev.):³ one of education systems that encourage equity and inclusion, quality learning, flexibility and innovation. While UNESCO puts highest emphasis on achieving Education for All (EFA), the Organization's actions in education extend beyond this, to pay explicit attention to inclusion, social cohesion and social justice, to lifelong learning and to the crucial role of higher education and research.

The overall goal of the UNESCO Strategy for the Second Half of the DESD is to support Member States and other stakeholders in addressing global sustainable development challenges at regional, national and global level through ESD, thus addressing the challenges of learning for bringing about a more sustainable world.



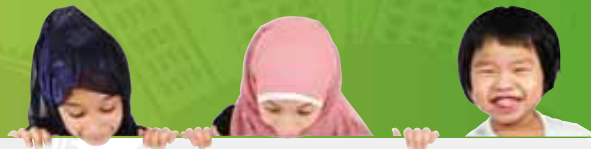
1 See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001849/184944e.pdf>.

2 See Chapter 2 of the 2009 DESD M&E report, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001849/184944e.pdf>.

3 See also <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001841/184163e.pdf>.

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THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The global financial and economic crisis⁴ has highlighted the weaknesses of prevailing economic paradigms and, in the process, stimulated a questioning of widely held assumptions about desirable lifestyles, development models and personal values. The very suddenness with which the crisis occurred was a shock to those who took stability and continuity for granted. Hopes for speedy recovery have therefore been joined by a desire for viable, long-term solutions and greater sustainability, especially in the perspective of other crises concerning climate change, natural disasters, food and energy.

Education in general has been affected by the multiple crises – not only in terms of threats to budgets, aid flows and learning opportunities, but also in terms of the very purposes of education : what kind of society and economy, indeed what kind of future, should education prepare learners for ? And how should it respond to the changing realities around us as well as prepare for – and contribute to – a different future? These types of questions have long been important components of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), but have now, in 2010, acquired new urgency and relevance. This was well captured by the Bonn Declaration: “Investment in Education for Sustainable Development is an investment in the future!”

The United Nations system sees an alternative future emerging out of the crisis in terms of a “Green Economy”. The Interagency Statement of 25 June 2009 on “Green Economy : a Transformation to Address Multiple Crises”⁵ clearly states that “the shift towards a green economy requires education for sustainable development”. Indeed, building green economies and sustainable societies requires more than clean technologies. Humankind will not solve the problems it faces today with the same values and approaches that created them. Hence, the international community needs to understand green economies as sustainable societies, creating a balance between environmental, societal, cultural and economic considerations in the pursuit of an enhanced quality of life.⁶ A key advantage of the concept of sustainable development is that, through its social, economic and environmental pillars as well as its cultural and ethical dimensions, global challenges are understood in all their complexity.



4 See also documents 35 C/INF.11, 35 C/INF.27 and 35 C/INF.33.

5 See <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2009/june/green-economy-a-transformation-to-address-multiple-crises.en>.

6 See UNESCO Future Forum on “Moving Towards a Green Economy and Green Jobs”

(http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=46207&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) and

on «Mitigating Climate change – Building a Global Green Society» (http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=46713&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

A case in point is climate change, the debate over which in recent years has drawn on scientific evidence regarding the impact of human activities on global warming and has mobilized the international community to address climate change⁷ and the increase in climate-related disasters. From Kyoto to Copenhagen, this problem is perceived by a great majority as having implications only for the environment. However, its complexity, its multiple implications, its global scale and the need for local action call for considering climate change through a dynamic interface between environmental, economic, social and cultural factors. Indeed, climate change is not solely environmental in terms of its root causes (economic development models, industrialization, urbanization, consumption and lifestyle patterns, etc.), nor in terms of its actual and anticipated effects (increased scarcity of resources, flows of refugees, etc.), or the means through which it may be mitigated (international conventions on carbon emissions, national green taxes, awareness-raising programmes, etc.) This is why UNESCO promotes ESD as the best framework for addressing climate change issues through education.

To make an enhanced and more visible educational contribution to the international response to climate change, in line with paragraph 16 (g) of the Bonn Declaration, UNESCO is developing a Climate Change Education for Sustainable Development Initiative, to enhance and promote active learning and innovative ways of framing the climate change issue so that it makes sense in the context of people's daily lives, helping to translate passive awareness into active concern and behaviour change. This initiative seeks to help children and young people understand, address and adapt to the impacts of climate change and to build a new generation of climate change aware citizens, while also encouraging the changes in attitudes and behaviours needed to put our world on a more sustainable development path.

In particular, the initiative aims to :

1. strengthen the capacity of Member States to provide quality climate change education focusing at primary and secondary school level in the area of policy reform and development, curriculum review and renewal, and education of teachers and other educational personnel ;

⁷ See also UNESCO's Strategy for Action on Climate Change (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001627/162715e.pdf>) ; http://www.unesco.org/en/education/dynamic-content-single-view/news/education_for_sustainable_development_crucial_to_tackle_climate_change/back/9195/cHash/633f273139/, and ESD Day at 35th General Conference (http://www.unesco.org/en/education/dynamic-content-single-view/news/esd_day_at_unescos_general_conference/browse/1/back/9195/cHash/c8b38482f6/).



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2. encourage and enhance innovative teaching approaches to integrate quality climate change education for sustainable development in school through science education, disaster and risk education, TVET, skills development for green economy, preparing for skills adapted to a changing environment and by applying “whole school approaches”;

3. raise awareness about climate change and enhance non-formal education programmes through media, networking and partnerships.

The DESD must be seen in the framework of the wider development agenda. Indeed, ESD is a long-term endeavour going far beyond the end of the Decade. While the Decade will come to an end in 2014, the year 2015 will be crucial, as it is the reporting year for both the Hyogo Framework of Action⁸ and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁹ ESD is closely linked to MDG 2 (focused on primary education), MDG 7 (concerning environmental sustainability) and MDG 8 (for a global development partnership), but relates and clearly contributes to the achievement of each of the other MDGs. ESD is relevant to all environmental, cultural, economic and socio-political contexts, and provides a concrete tool for addressing global sustainable challenges through education, taking into account regional specificities, challenges and priorities.

ESD influences education towards effectively addressing current global challenges. ESD promotes, for instance, a sense of both local and global responsibility, encourages future-oriented and critical thinking, integrates traditional knowledge, builds recognition of global interdependence and promotes reflection on new lifestyles that combine well-being, quality of life and respect for nature and other people. ESD is transformative education at heart. The current context therefore gives us a chance to improve educational systems with a view to increasing both the quality and the relevance of education in this fast-changing world.

KEY AREAS OF STRATEGIC ACTION FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE DESD (2010-2015)¹⁰

The DESD concerns everyone. It is up to everyone to contribute, in ways large and small, to changes in thinking, values, attitudes and behaviours conducive to achieving sustainable development. To this end, UNESCO is committed to serving as a change agent through education to mobilize Member States, United Nations agencies, partners, communities and individuals to promote ESD and implement the Decade.

8 See <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/hfa.htm>.

9 See <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>.

10 See also document 35 C/54.





Based on the recommendations from the resolution of the 35th session of the General Conference and the decision of the 182nd session of the Executive Board, extensive consultations have been conducted internally and externally, including with DESD technical and advisory expert groups and committees, such as the member agencies of the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee for the DESD.

Developed through a multi-stakeholder consultative process, this global strategy aims to ensure ownership and commitment on the part of UNESCO's programme sectors, institutes and field offices for an accelerated and focused implementation of the DESD, and support to the regional and national ESD strategies and frameworks¹¹ currently in place. The Strategy provides a set of focused priorities through which UNESCO will put knowledge into action and promote the further integration of ESD into all types and settings of education at all levels. UNESCO seeks to create an enabling environment for promoting ESD and developing the capacity of Member States and other stakeholders and partners to promote the goals of the DESD, thereby also contributing to the fulfilment of the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UNESCO will serve as a change agent through education to stimulate fresh initiatives, promote new forms of cooperation, boost the spread of good practices in ESD and place strong emphasis on enhancing partnerships in ESD to better mobilize and engage with key stakeholder groups. The Strategy will entail enhanced engagement with key stakeholders, including but not limited to UNESCO's National Commissions, youth, civil society including women's and faith-based organizations, the private sector and the media.

Evidence from good practices in ESD indicates that success factors include strong and effective partnerships that can contribute to promoting ESD, as well as enhanced promotion of ESD in school education and school-community coordination. There is, however, a need to strategically and carefully plan to ensure the benefits of partnerships. In particular, establishing and managing a wide range of stakeholders with different objectives, interests and approaches can be very time-consuming, and lack of clarity about the respective roles and responsibilities of partners can create difficulties. An essential element for ensuring an efficient implementation of the DESD is thus better engaging with key stakeholders, such as :

- UNESCO National Commissions, through providing them support and assistance in addressing ESD issues, in encouraging the development of coordinating mechanisms and in playing an important role in the DESD monitoring and evaluation process ;



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- youth, through fostering initiatives and partnerships that open up spaces for identifying, testing and implementing youth-led ideas and innovative approaches, in collaboration with a variety of international, regional and national youth and student organizations ;
- civil society, including women's organizations and faith-based organizations, through support for ESD communities of practice and exchanges of good ESD experiences;
- United Nations agencies like United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNHabitat, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and others, notably through the UN Inter-Agency Committee for the DESD (IAC) ;
- the private sector, through assistance with staff awareness-raising and outreach programmes, within the framework of professional development and corporate social responsibility activities ;
- the media, through providing good ESD examples, stories and contacts to stimulate debate and disseminate information among the wider public.

In 2010-2015, UNESCO will focus its efforts on the following four key areas of strategic action :

A. Enhancing synergies with different education and development initiatives and strengthening partnerships among ESD stakeholders

Achieving sustainable development requires a global change of mindsets, beliefs and behaviours, and education is vital to this task. Furthermore, sustainable development requires the building of partnerships at all levels – local, national, regional and global – and this certainly applies to education, where creating synergies between different education initiatives (EFA, MDGs, United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), the Global Initiative on Education and HIV/AIDS (EDUCAIDS), Hyogo Framework of Action, etc.) and harnessing the expertise in United Nations agencies, funds and programmes are essential. Moreover, ESD has a demonstrable relevance to the wider development agenda, particularly the MDGs. The integrated and systemic ESD approach is especially well suited to creating and enhancing such synergies.



As a promoter of international cooperation, UNESCO will focus its actions on :

- > the leadership and coordination role of UNESCO for the DESD, through enhancing coordination between United Nations agencies and international and regional organizations for the implementation of DESD regional and national strategies and frameworks, fostering closer synergies and linkages with other Decades, global initiatives and MDG-related processes, and incorporating ESD into “Delivering as One” United Nations strategies and MDG-related efforts ;
- > dialogue with governments and other key stakeholders to facilitate global and regional partnerships, through promoting South-South and North-South-South cooperation through building more effective networks and promoting national ESD coordination efforts, notably enhancing the linkages between ESD and EFA actions as well as between ESD and gender, sustainable livelihoods, climate change, biodiversity and disaster risk reduction ;
- > integration of ESD in UNESCO’s own programmes and relevant international normative instruments, by further developing intersectoral approaches, in particular through the ESD Intersectoral Platform, and by enhancing linkages between the DESD and key international conventions focusing on biodiversity, climate change, desertification and cultural diversity.

B. Developing and strengthening capacities for ESD

Reorienting education to integrate sustainable development principles, values and practices must take place not only in formal education institutions but also in other learning processes and social settings. Moreover, although creating an education that empowers people to address important sustainable development challenges is a multi-stakeholder endeavour – a task for the whole society – the primary responsibility rests with government. To support this task, UNESCO recognizes that suitable policies and well-designed programmes must be put in place. Reinforcing the abilities, competencies and professional knowledge of teachers and educators as well as promoting a culture of monitoring and evaluation are critical elements in this regard.

As a capacity-builder, UNESCO will focus its actions on :

- > capacity-building and policy advice to support national ESD implementation, especially in formal schooling, by enhancing upstream capacity development and policy advice, conducting training workshops for key stakeholders, using and reinforcing existing networks in ESD capabilities, including UNESCO networks, such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), developing ESD policy tools/briefs and supporting regional reviews of ESD integration into sectorwide policies as well as interregional cooperation on the development of educational policies and quality through ESD ;



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- > reorientation of teacher education and training programmes, through providing support and assistance to Ministries of Education and higher education institutions in the analysis and revision of programmes and curricula, reinforcing and supporting educators' communities of practice for adapting tools to local contexts, and exchanging on innovative approaches in ESD teaching and learning, in particular with view of integrating climate change education ;
- > assessment of ESD progress, through conducting new M&E capacity development activities, enhancing interregional cooperation and continuing the implementation of qualitative and quantitative DESD Monitoring and Evaluation for Phase II (2010-2011) on the processes and learning related to ESD and Phase III (2012-2015) on the impacts and outcomes of the DESD.

C. Building, sharing and applying ESD-related knowledge

Knowledge is an essential component of ESD. Promoting research, supporting the development of scientific understanding, and sharing and disseminating the vast amount of available knowledge, including traditional and indigenous knowledge, are central activities within the DESD. UNESCO will support the development of national research agendas and assist in building the capacity of higher education institutions to engage in ESD-related research and innovation.

As a laboratory of ideas, UNESCO will focus its actions on :

- > supporting research institutions to generate knowledge, share new approaches and enhance evidence-based policy dialogue, by promoting the development of national research agendas, research programmes, initiatives, good practices and consultations in particular in areas such as technical and vocational education and training (TVET), climate change, water education and public/private partnership ;
- > collecting and disseminating information on ESD programmes, research, innovations, good practices and materials, through various means, including the DESD publication series ;
- > applying the expertise available in UNESCO networks to its education programmes (in particular UNESCO Chairs, Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA), UNESCO Associated Schools and the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Network of Biosphere Reserves, etc.) to promote, build and share ESD knowledge and learning; and enhancing cooperation amongst Intersectoral Platforms (ESD, climate change, post-conflict post disaster (PCPD), small island developing states (SIDS), Foresight and Anticipation, Science Education).





D. Advocating for ESD, and increasing awareness and understanding of sustainability

The success of the Decade rests on the formulation and sharing of a common vision of ESD and on mobilization of support for the DESD in both general and targeted ways. Civil society, the media and the private sector are vital partners for achieving large-scale mobilization. Increasing the visibility and improving the profile of ESD, especially among educators, policymakers and young people, are necessary to ensure that the sustainable development agenda becomes better known and more widely accepted.

As task manager for Chapter 36 (Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training) of Agenda 21, UNESCO will focus its actions on :

- > lobbying/advocacy to increase the visibility of the Decade through public outreach, awareness and mobilization, including advocacy campaigns and events, training for media professionals, and communication at international and regional events, in particular concerning climate change ;
- > highlighting ESD's relevance to global sustainability challenges by mobilizing around key themes and events, developing training and advocacy tools for different stakeholders in formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts, paying particular attention to early childhood care and education and lifelong learning pathways, and documenting DESD implementation from local and global viewpoints ;
- > mobilization of increased funding for ESD, through information exchange on innovative tools for resource mobilization, development of fundraising strategies and identification of possible donors ;
- > lobbying for the inclusion of ESD on the agenda of international fora and conferences, through highlighting the relevance and importance of ESD to relevant issues being debated, participating in key events on education, and bringing ESD to the agenda of major education and development forums.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Information on progress made in the implementation of the Strategy will be provided through the Director-General's reports on the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference (EX/4), at every session of the Executive Board until the end of 2014, as well as through specific progress reports to the 2011 and 2013 Executive Board sessions prior to the 36th and 37th sessions of the General Conference.

A key moment, marking the conclusion of the DESD, will be the End-of-Decade Conference to be co-organized in 2014 by Japan and UNESCO. This will provide an opportunity to take stock of achievements during the DESD and explore how to continue the work of this global movement in favour of education and learning for sustainability in future years. Furthermore, an end-of-decade report will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.





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2010/ED/UNP/DESD/6