

The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development pursues **a global vision**:

The vision of education for sustainable development is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behavior and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation.

The proposed **DESD objectives** are to:

1. give an enhanced profile to the central role of education and learning in the common pursuit of sustainable development;
2. facilitate links and networking, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in ESD
3. provide a space and opportunity for refining and promoting the vision of, and transition to sustainable development – through all forms of learning and public awareness;
4. foster increased quality of teaching and learning in education for sustainable development;
5. develop strategies at every level to strengthen capacity in ESD

Key roles for education

- Education must inspire the belief that each of us has both the power and the responsibility to effect positive change on a global scale.
- Education is the primary agent of transformation towards sustainable development, increasing peoples capacities to transform their vision for society into reality.
- Education fosters the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future.
- Education for sustainable development is a process of learning how to make decisions that consider the long-term future of the equity, economy and ecology of all communities.
- Education builds the capacity for such futures-oriented thinking.

The underlying values which education for sustainable development must promote include at least the following:

- Respect for the dignity and human rights of all people throughout the world and a commitment to social and economic justice for all;
- Respect for the human rights of future generations and a commitment to intergenerational responsibility;
- Respect and care for the greater community of life in all its diversity which involves the protection and restoration of the Earth's ecosystems;
- Respect for cultural diversity and a commitment to build locally and globally a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace.

Education for sustainable development should not be equated with environment education.

But sustainable development encompasses environmental education, setting it in the broader context of socio-cultural factors and the socio-political issues of equity, poverty, democracy and quality of life. Sustainable development must be integrated into other disciplines and cannot, because of its scope, be taught as a discreet subject.

Education for sustainable development will **aim to demonstrate the following features:**

- Interdisciplinary and holistic: learning for sustainable development embedded in the whole curriculum, not as a separate subject;
- Values-driven: it is critical that the assumed norms – the shared values and principles underpinning sustainable development – are made explicit so that they can be examined, debated, tested and applied;
- Critical thinking and problem solving: leading to confidence in addressing the dilemmas and challenges of sustainable development;
- Multi-method: word, art, drama, debate, experience, ... different pedagogies which model the processes. Teaching that is geared simply to passing on knowledge should be recast into an approach in which teachers and learners work together to acquire knowledge and play a role in shaping the environment of their educational institutions;
- Participatory decision-making: learners participate in decisions on how they are to learn;
- Locally relevant: addressing local as well as global issues, and using the language(s) which learners most commonly use.

According to the UN General Assembly resolution instituting the DESD governments are invited to “consider the inclusion of measures to implement the Decade in their respective educational strategies and action plans by 2005”. That emphasizes the **responsibility of government** to initiate this process.

- **ESD Hub** that should be tasked to energise and coordinate the implementation of the DESD in each country.
- **A National ESD Consultative Group to bring all stakeholders together and build momentum**
- **An Inter-Agency Coordination Committee on DESD**
- **Develop international networks of institutions and create regional centres of excellence** , which bring together universities, polytechnics, and institutions of secondary education and primary schools
- **Monitoring and Evaluation: Indicators and data**
- **Timeline**