

ADVANCING EDUCATION AS A GOAL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ON THE ROAD TO NAGOYA - MOVING TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES

1 Context/Rationale

On the road to Nagoya and the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in November 2014, IGES and UNE-IAS organised a session aimed at providing a road map for advancing education as a key mechanism in achieving sustainable development. The Nagoya conference will mark the conclusion of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014), but it also heralds the launch of two new international programmes. The Global Action Plan (GAP) on ESD will be formalised and launched during this conference as the successor of DESD. Additionally, the Sustainable Lifestyles and Education (SLE) Programme – part of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production – is intended for launch in Nagoya. With meaningful framing, approaches and strategies, these two programmes could substantially contribute to post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2 Objectives

Bringing together ESD experts, the session addressed how transformative learning, social change and transitions to sustainability could be supported through improved educational approaches and the creation of enabling environments for sustainable lifestyles. Additionally, questions on how to best integrate aspects of quality education, ESD learning performance, and global citizenship and peace education into the framing of the GAP on ESD were explored by session discussants and presenters. The panel discussion addressed how these two programmes can meaningfully contribute to the sustainable development agenda. In so doing, the objective of this session was to develop important findings and recommendations that might support the progressive framing of the GAP on ESD and the SLE Programme for realising transformative processes towards sustainable lifestyles.



3 List of Speakers

[Moderator]

Masahisa Sato Tokyo City University

[Opening Remarks]

Asako Toyozumi United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)

[Keynote Speaker]

Danilo Padilla Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Programme Coordinator / Liaison Officer, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Bangkok

[Speakers]

Paul Ofei-Manu Policy Researcher, Education and Learning for Sustainability, Integrated Policies for Sustainable Societies Area / Programme Officer, Capacity Development, Programme Management Office, IGES

Abel Barasa Atiti Research Fellow, United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)

Yoshiyuki Nagata Professor, Department of Education, University of the Sacred Heart / Expert, Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Group on ESD, UNESCO Headquarters

Shepherd Urenje Senior Programme Specialist in Education for Sustainable Development, Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development (SWEDESD) at Uppsala University

[Discussant]

Robert J. Didham Senior Coordinator, Capacity Development and Knowledge Management / Principal Policy Researcher, Programme Management Office, IGES

4 Key Messages

The ISAP education session speakers, including UNESCO Bangkok, UNU-IAS, Swedish International Centre of ESD (SWEDESD) and IGES will further collaborate on the implementation of GAP on ESD in order to contribute to the SDGs and the post-2015 Agenda.

IGES holds firm to the belief that quality education is critical for sustainable development. In pursuing quality education, the focus is on strengthening ESD-based learning performance framed around a holistic and transformative understanding of ESD and empowering learners with the capacities to address the challenges of a sustainable future for all.

Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) on ESD are committed to scaling up action on multi-stakeholder engagement processes within the ESD agenda and accelerating the search for sustainable solutions at the local level to address sustainable development challenges.

Transformative learning for sustainable lifestyles is crucial for a sustainable future. Youth will be particularly important agents of change through ESD. The holistic approach in Post-DESD needs to focus more on youth groups and the kind of transformative learning that helps strengthens the links between individuals and society.

SWEDESD has worked toward reorienting and strengthening education and learning, including communities of practice in Africa and Asia. The GAP aims to implement whole-institution approaches, increasing the capacity of facilitators and encouraging local communities to develop community-based ESD programmes.

5 Summary of Presentation

The keynote speaker, Danilo Padilla, introduced his office's ESD related activities. During the last four decades, UNESCO has proposed a series of educational initiatives that touch upon the notion of sustainable development. Based on the results and experience of the DESD implementation in different countries, he emphasised the importance of ESD as an advanced educational concept which improves the quality of education, promotes regional education reform and innovation, enriches the teaching contents of all types of education at all levels as well as effectively promotes the innovation of learning styles. ESD enables people to pay close attention to the actual problems of SD and encourages youths and adults to practice sustainable lifestyles. He expects the World Conference on ESD 2014 in November will summarise the experiences and lessons learnt from DESD implementation and will be an important milestone in the history of ESD which perpetuate the educational reform and innovation globally. He suggested further collaboration regarding the implementation of GAP on ESD so that we contribute to the SDGs and the post-2015 ESD agenda.

The first presenter, Paul Ofei-Manu, elaborated upon how to enhance aspects of quality education. He stressed that strengthening quality education is central to sustainable human development and an important contributor to sustainable development. Achieving enhanced quality education requires a holistic understanding of ESD. He insisted that the focus should be on strengthening ESD-based learning performance framework (LPF). The LPF can be used to assess existing and future ESD cases and offer a concrete guide for implementing sustainability-related projects. He further argued that quality education should be a cornerstone of the GAP on ESD, an SDG education goal, and the post-2015 agenda. Quality education for sustainable development could be significantly enhanced through applying the LPF as a roadmap that illustrates how stronger ESD can promote greater educational quality overall and empower learners to pursue a sustainable future for all.

The second presenter, Abel Atiti, highlighted the roles being played by 129 UNU Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs) on ESD. The RCEs on ESD supports projects and activities that promote relationships, collaborative learning, networking, systems thinking, and the roles of diversity and flexibility in fostering sustainable communities. The RCEs have reoriented curriculum processes in schools, applied innovative pedagogies, improved learners skills and employability, integrated sustainability into higher education, transformed livelihoods through community engagement and collaboration, and created sustainable neighborhoods. He underlined that the RCEs were committed to the post-2014 ESD Agenda as way to help scale up action through multi-stakeholder engagement processes that equips local communities with the power and responsibility to effect positive change and improve livelihoods.

The third presenter, Yoshiyuki Nagata, spoke about the importance of transformative learning for sustainable lifestyles with an emphasis on youth as change agents. He introduced the notion of HOPE – holistic, ownership-based, participatory and empowering – evaluation framework developed by the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO. He then remarked on the implementation of this evaluation approach with youth groups after the Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami. He found that youth acknowledged their role as agents of change through ESD. Based upon his other related experiences, he suggested that holistic approaches in post-DESD need to focus more on youths and transformative learning between individual and society.

The featured speaker, Shepherd Urenje shared SWEDESD's challenges and successes in implementing transformative learning for sustainable lifestyles. SWEDESD has worked on reorienting and strengthening education and learning, using innovative methods such as communities of practice in Africa and Asia. He concluded that transformative learning is a crucial tool to guide future action. For the GAP on ESD, SWEDESD aims to implement whole-institution approaches, increase the capacity of facilitators, and encourage local communities to develop community-based ESD programmes.

6 Summary of Discussion

The discussion section, moderated by Robert Didham, investigated each speaker's recommendations for framing the GAP on ESD and the SLE Programme. Danilo Padilla suggested 'good practices' related to quality education, transformative learning and global citizenship can help upscale the GAP on ESD frameworks. Further, the GAP will support SDGs by encouraging full participation across stakeholders and including UNESCO's crucial partnership. Paul Ofei-Manu considered 'quality education' as the most important factor influencing the achievement of various development goals—including but not limited to the current education goal. He also underlined that quality education with an ESD perspective is a strategic investment and will play an important role in achieving the overall sustainable development agenda. In response to the question of how the RCEs – one of the unique models for ESD cooperation and learning – are able to address sustainability issues at both local and global levels, Abel Atiti answered RCEs are the platform where local issues are shared and linked globally. He believes that many of these issues are interconnected – i.e. signs of global citizenship have already begun to appear with RCEs in local areas. On the question of what emerging issues could be considered for achieving quality education for sustainable development framed into the upcoming GAP on ESD, Yoshiyuki Nagata recommended that the HOPE framework can deliver tangible outcomes. Finally, Shepherd Urenje answered a question about the key factors enabling the learning process by pointing to a transition from an approach based on individual learning to one that is based on cooperative group learning for sustainability. Based on his work experience on transformative learning for sustainable lifestyles, interface between theory and practice is crucial – i.e. awareness-raising and multi-stakeholder dialogue are all necessary to move from ideas to implementation. Individual and social learning or self and society are thus strongly interconnected.