

Panelist's Speech

Part 3: Panel Discussion on How ESD Can Empower Local Communities in Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles¹ (21 October 2013, 1:30-5:00PM)

International Symposium on “Inspiring Sustainable Lifestyles through ESD” (21 October 2013)

Major challenges to sustainable development are elevating due to rising inequalities; unemployment, underemployment, and vulnerable jobs; increasing vulnerability to natural disasters, environmental degradation, and climate change impacts; high volatile prices of food and fuel; violence against women and girls; deficits in critical infrastructure; water constraints; energy insecurity; and insufficient social protection measures. In a world of limited natural resources, unsustainable production and consumption patterns in areas like deforestation, water scarcity, food waste, and high carbon emissions will result in threatening consequences in the future. People living in poverty are the ones who suffer first and worst. The poor are also greatly affected by deteriorating oceans, forests and soils which they use as their primary sources of livelihoods.

As we approach 2015, global discussions have started to be made to reflect on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) goals, and sequentially to begin a Post-2015 Development Agenda that responds to the challenges of sustainable development.

In order to address the universal challenges of the 21st century, endeavors need to be made to achieve sustainable development by:

First, everyone inclusively and equitably needs to be empowered and enabled to sustainably develop themselves in the long term. Opportunities to secure good and decent jobs/livelihoods need to be provided to lift everyone out of poverty, to reduce inequality, and to replace vulnerability with resilience. Jobs need to be created, and people need to be equipped with formal education, as well as life skills and vocational skills to prepare them for the job market and the world of work. These people need to be secured by equitable access to good quality healthcare services, and live in an environment that is stable and secure, just, and democratic.

Second, environmental challenges need to be tackled, climate change needs to be more strongly prevented and responded to, and limited natural resources need to be protected and sustained over the long term. Capacities need to be developed to use innovative techniques and better technologies to promote sustainable green practices that are cost-effective.

Third, economic growth needs to be promoted without exploiting human and natural capital, but in investing in them. Endeavors need to be made to continuously achieve economic growth

¹ Delivered by Dr. Anwar Al-Said (Head of the Education Unit, UNESCO Office, Jakarta)

through efforts to innovate, raise productivity, add value, produce higher quality products, or more varied products. Investments need to be made to enhance knowledge and skills, to utilize better technologies, and to intensify agriculture. A conducive environment, in terms of supportive policies and opportunities, needs to be provided for people to establish micro, small and medium sized enterprises.

Great advances have been made to address the above social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainable development. However, much still remains to be done to improve social, environmental, and economic conditions which are interlinked and therefore need to be addressed in an integrated manner.

The principles of sustainable development need to be integrated in national strategies and policies, as well as in corporate business strategies, and implemented with good governance. The focus on implementing the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development need to be made more balanced, synergistic, and aimed for long-term goals and benefits.

For people to realize the changes needed to be made to achieve sustainable development, they need to be equipped with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). ESD would make education and learning more relevant and responsive to present and future challenges. Through ESD, learners could acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that would influence personal lifestyles and economic choices to create sustainable development. With enhanced awareness and understanding on ESD, learners would be encouraged to actively apply their critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership skills to promote sustainable development. As underlined in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) outcome document “The Future We Want”, ESD is to be further promoted and sustainable development to be integrated more actively into education beyond the UN DESD” (Para. 233). ESD needs to be given from the early years of formal school up to higher education, as well as for lifelong learning through non-formal and informal education.

ESD would encourage people to live with sustainable lifestyles that would further promote implementation of sustainable consumption and production, as adopted during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Sustainable consumption and production means buying and producing goods and services that do not result in a harmful or negative effect today and/or result in a harmful or negative impact in the future to the environment, society, and the economy. Being more aware of sustainable development issues, we would be more curious and critical about the products/services we buy and how they were produced. This knowledge would lead us to adopt more sustainable consumption/production choices.

We need to inspire national and local governments and businesses to adopt more sustainable and more efficient consumption and production patterns, and inspire individuals to adopt more sustainable lifestyles, in the way they use water, grow food, generate and use energy, travel, and transport goods. These changes need to be driven by education and learning on sustainable

development principles and issues, encouragements by country/community leaders, technological advances, and innovations.

Governments, in cooperation with academia and educational/research institutions, need to further share good practices and knowledge on how to promote green growth and sustainable consumption and production patterns. Sharing information with the public through campaigns and the media on the advantages of green growth and sustainable consumption and production could raise the public's awareness and change their mindsets to adopt more sustainable lifestyle patterns for their future prosperity.

Governments, in cooperation with academia and educational/research institutions, could also develop guidelines on approaches and measures medium-sized and large-size businesses and the general public could take to conduct their activities based on sustainable consumption and production patterns. The guidelines should also include accountability methods on how to properly cost environmentally and socially hazardous activities and behaviors. Monitoring and evaluation, with internationally defined indicators and benchmarks, need to be periodically conducted on the consumption and production patterns of medium-size and large-size public and private businesses to assess alignment of their practices to sustainable development principles. This assessment needs to be backed by a strong willingness of medium and large public and private businesses and the Government entities in charge to make the needed periodic reports. Incentives (e.g. recognition, awards, financial support, and subsidies) and supportive regulations should be offered to the public to encourage medium-size and large-size businesses to commit themselves to invest in more sustainable modes of consumption and production. Sustainable development principles need to be socialized to the media as they could give strong support in socializing these principles, as well as in visibly promoting businesses or agencies that have successfully applied sustainable modes of consumption and production.

To establish sustainable development systems in local communities, Education for Sustainable Development needs to be more integrated systematically and holistically in formal and non-formal education curricula, teaching-learning materials, and pedagogical approaches used by learners and teachers. Specific targets and benchmarks to assess learning outcomes achieved need to be defined, and assessments on the impact of ESD on the values and behavior of learners need to be made.

Inclusion of ESD and sustainable development principles need to be internalized and mainstreamed in nationally/locally-owned education and development strategies, policies, plans, targets, budgetary plans, and regulations. These official government documents need to state clear priorities for action that can be followed up by relevant ministries, agencies, as well as the general public. Socialization and capacity development interventions need to be adequately provided to all relevant government officials from the central to local levels, and formal and non-formal teachers and lecturers to ensure that they are able to reorient their thinking and actions based on sustainable development principles and objectives in their programmes and teaching-learning activities.

Activities that have proven successful and irreversible in achieving sustainable development need to be up-scaled. Evidence-based good practices need to be more widely shared for possible adoption or adaptation by other agencies or countries.

Partnerships need to be made among the public and private sectors, academics and citizens to respond to sustainable development challenges identified in their local areas that are interlinked and interdisciplinary based on mutual benefit objectives. Through partnerships, technical and financial support needed by each party could be more secured, the conditions for fair trade could be better acquired, and risks and uncertainties could be reduced. Working together could amplify the results and impacts that could be achieved towards sustainable development.

Since 2012 UNESCO Office, Jakarta has assisted the Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Timor-Leste (the five Cluster Countries under UNESCO Office, Jakarta) in strengthening Education for Sustainable Development. Two high-level policy dialogue meetings were organized. In the first, “ESD Country Report Meeting” (Jakarta, 5 June 2012), senior education policy officers from the five cluster countries met to exchange experiences, best practices, and lessons learnt on ESD development and implementation. As a result of the event, a compendium was produced detailing national progress and next steps in ESD implementation for each country. In the second event, Policy Workshop Review (Jakarta, 7-8 June 2012), 25 policy makers from the five cluster countries came together to discuss their national policies vis-à-vis UNESCO’s ‘ESD Lens’, a tool for reviewing ESD policy and practice. As a result of this meeting, representatives from the five cluster countries strengthened their capacity to review and revise of policies to include ESD content and approaches. At the regional levels, UNESCO provided ESD capacity building, policy development support and network building to education managers and teachers through international workshops. In addition, UNESCO assisted the Cluster Countries in developing ESD teaching and learning materials and a framework for the integration of ESD into the national curricula.

In Indonesia, UNESCO Office, Jakarta is supporting “*Green School Action Project for Climate Change Education*” in Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan, Indonesia) with funding from the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). This project provided teacher training in ESD content and active learning pedagogies to 20 pilot schools and supported the implementation of student ‘action projects’ on a variety of ESD-related themes. In addition, a Teacher Training Centre was established and equipped with computer workstations at the Banjarmasin Educational Authority. Through development and results dissemination of a pre-project and post-project Basic Surveys and Studies, as well as development of environmental school curricula, teaching materials and tool kits, there has been improved understanding and consciousness of the project beneficiaries and partners on climate change to protect the environment. Teachers and head teachers of pilot schools, as well as educational policy-decision makers responsible for ESD, climate change education, and green growth education have deepened knowledge on environmental issues, and ICT through participation in an organized training programme. The Green School Teacher Training Centre (i.e. Web-House) and

network have been developed at the national level, and maintained by the pilot schools. Teachers and students of the pilot schools have enhanced their understanding on the concepts of sustainable development, climate change, and green growth.

It is our hope that the suggestions that have been mentioned here can guide us in taking stronger endeavors to empower people with knowledge on ESD that they could use to promote more sustainable lifestyles and better respond to the ever more complex challenges of sustainable development.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.