



United Nations  
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# Shaping the Future We Want

UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development  
(2005-2014)

FINAL REPORT

DESD Monitoring and Evaluation

S U M M A R Y

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# Shaping the Future We Want

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# Foreword

This Report comes at a critical time as UN Member States prepare to conclude negotiations on the global post-2015 agenda and launch a set of sustainable development goals. Deep economic and social inequalities, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, disruption caused by natural disasters and climate change are a litmus test for the global community. More than ever, this is a time when education can – and must – play a decisive role in providing learners across the world with the knowledge, skills and values to discover solutions to today's sustainability challenges. This carries benefit for present and future generations. It is a conviction that brings us together to the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Aichi-Nagoya in November 2014.

There are many reasons to celebrate as this Final Monitoring and Evaluation of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) sets out to demonstrate. The Decade has activated hundreds of thousands of people to reorient education globally towards a central goal: to learn to live and work sustainably. ESD has spread across all levels and areas of education, in all regions of the world and is widely considered key in supporting sustainable development. International and national strategies dealing with the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are beginning to reflect ESD as a crucial component.

ESD has galvanized pedagogical innovation. Education policy, including curricula changes, now promotes learning for sustainable development in many countries – from early childhood learning through to private sector training. Students are gaining direct experience of sustainability through a wide range of school-based “learning by doing” ESD initiatives that have been introduced in a number of countries.

Extensive partnerships and networks – within and between sectors – have been key to the successful accomplishments of the Decade. Children, youth and students have played an important role as agents of change, participating actively in discussions that affect their future, advocating for a transformation in their learning environments and bringing the messages of sustainability and global citizenship home to parents and communities.

Perhaps one of the most significant lessons learned during the Decade is that strong political leadership is instrumental to advancing ESD. But this is still work in progress. Leadership is essential for moving from policy commitments and demonstration projects to full implementation across the curriculum, teaching and operations, whether in formal systems or in non-formal learning and public awareness raising.

The Decade provides a solid base for scaling up our efforts to prepare the citizens of tomorrow to respond to the challenges of today. ESD advances quality education through more innovative ways of teaching and learning and the engagement of all stakeholders.

As a follow-up to the Decade, UNESCO has developed a Global Action Programme on ESD, which was endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference in 2013 and will be launched in Nagoya. The Programme aims at scaling up action in ESD in order to accelerate overall progress towards sustainable development, and marks an important contribution to the global post-2015 development agenda.

By analyzing achievements, trends and challenges, this Report provides valuable direction for policy-makers, educators, experts and other stakeholders in their ongoing efforts to advance understanding and action on ESD.

I would like to thank all of those involved, from governments and policy-makers to individual teachers and students across the world, for their significant and continued commitment towards ESD and for contributing to the success of the Decade. This continued engagement will ensure the successful implementation of the Global Action Programme, and to fulfilling our vision of a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Irina Bokova". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'I' being particularly large and stylized.

Irina Bokova  
Director-General of UNESCO

# Introduction

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) (DESD) aimed at integrating the principles and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, to encourage changes in knowledge, values and attitudes with the vision of enabling a more sustainable and just society for all.

This summary for policy- and decision-makers provides a brief overview of the key findings and trends, a synopsis of highlights, challenges and actions across all levels and areas of education, and steps for scaling up actions presented in the UNESCO 2014 Global Monitoring and Evaluation Final Report, *Shaping the Future We Want – UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)*. The Final Report provides an assessment of progress towards embedding education for sustainable development (ESD) into education systems and into sustainable development efforts. Building on the findings of the past two DESD Global Monitoring and Evaluation reports, and based upon Member States' and other stakeholders' assessments of the current state of ESD, the Final Report maps the achievements and challenges of a decade of progress and action on ESD at the global, national, regional and local levels, and within all areas and levels of education.

The Final Report concludes that a solid foundation has been laid for ESD at the end of the DESD, achieved by raising awareness, influencing policies and generating significant numbers of good practice projects in all areas of education and learning. At the end of 10 years of work, 10 key findings and trends have emerged that will guide ESD into the future. The report also shows that despite the successes, a full integration of ESD into education systems has yet to take place in most countries.

The Global Action Programme (GAP) for ESD, which was endorsed by UNESCO Member States in 2013 as a follow-up to the DESD, will mobilize stakeholders to generate and scale up ESD actions building on the DESD.



# Key findings and trends, 10 years on

Through the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Member States have committed to integrate sustainable development into education systems. The following key findings highlight major trends and leverage points for ESD and are based on evidence from 10 years of work around the world.

## ESD, an enabler for sustainable development

### 1. Education systems are addressing sustainability issues

Across many countries, a strong trend can now be seen to make education more relevant to the social, environmental and economic challenges that the world faces today and in the future. ESD provides a renewed vision and purpose for educational policy and practice. Many now agree, quality education for sustainable development reinforces people's sense of responsibility as global citizens and better prepares them for the world they will inherit.

Evidence at the end of the DESD suggests that the process of reorienting education policies, curricula and plans towards sustainable development is well underway in most reporting Member States.

### 2. Sustainable development agendas and education agendas are converging

Stakeholders for sustainable development are increasingly taking up education, public awareness and training to advance sustainable development. Education is figuring prominently in international debates on sustainable development, and greater attention is now being paid to education, training and public awareness as essential mechanisms to support the implementation of major environmental conventions and agreements. Significantly, more and more countries are incorporating education strategies, tools and targets into national sustainable development strategies.

## Importance of stakeholder engagement for ESD

### 3. Political leadership has proven instrumental

Political leadership has helped to create the organizational climate necessary for change. As a result, important advances have been made to put national ESD strategies or plans in place, contributing to the integration of ESD into national education and sustainable development policies.

Countries have adopted a variety of approaches to reorient education systems: from creating a strong basis for ESD by embedding it in national legislation, policies and standards, through to more decentralized approaches involving multiple stakeholders.

### 4. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are particularly effective

The DESD has helped to reinforce the importance of partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders. The use of mechanisms like national coordinating groups has helped to shape ESD policy at the country level and is supporting research and implementation of ESD.

Interactions among the growing networks of universities investing in ESD in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere have led to international commitments and peer support for ESD implementation. Similarly, networking of schools has connected students to learning and sharing across the globe. In addition, partnerships involving civil society organizations, the private sector, schools and governments have also been crucial in building ESD capacity in many countries.

### **5. Local commitments are growing**

The implementation of ESD now includes unique features that relate to the local context. For example, in formal education, community engagement helps young children and students learn about local issues. Elsewhere, lessons from public awareness raising efforts have reinforced the importance of working at local levels to increase citizens' knowledge and participation in local solutions. Similarly, the private sector's need for an educated, skilled workforce to support green and sustainable enterprises at the local level has influenced technical and vocational education and training as well as capacity-building.

## **ESD is galvanizing pedagogical innovation**

### **6. Whole-institution approaches practise ESD**

Whole-institution approaches encompass mainstreaming sustainability into all aspects of the learning environment. This includes embedding sustainability in curriculum and learning processes, facilities and operations, interaction with the surrounding community, governance and capacity-building.

Such approaches are increasing and are helping learners to contribute to sustainable development in their schools or institutions, communities and workplaces. In a move towards long-term efforts to address the social, economic and environmental footprint in their communities, schools are engaging students in the process of reducing and managing that footprint.

Institutions of higher education have also made significant commitments to whole-institution changes, from sustainability in operations and management to changes in teaching, curriculum and research, as well as participation in strengthening sustainable development in their surrounding communities.

### **7. ESD facilitates interactive, learner-driven pedagogies**

Participatory learning processes, critical thinking and problem-based learning are proving particularly conducive to ESD. Although more evidence is needed, research is beginning to suggest that students who learn through these methods, together with the content of sustainable development, develop greater awareness of and responsibility for the world around them. Educators at all levels are central to this process.

## **ESD has spread across all levels and areas of education**

### **8. ESD is being integrated into formal education**

There is growing recognition among policy-makers that early childhood care and education is the foundation of sustainable development. In primary and secondary education, evidence of increasing policy attention to, and integration of, ESD is especially strong. Reviews of official curriculum documents have found that many countries now include sustainability and/or environmental themes as one of the general goals of education. The last 10 years have also seen higher education stepping up its efforts towards sustainable development.



## **9. Non-formal and informal ESD is increasing**

In the daily lives of communities, families and individuals, awareness of environment and sustainable development issues is reported to have improved in many countries.

Major gains have been made through education and training to strengthen the private sector to respond to sustainable development. In many cases, education, training and awareness-raising efforts are leading to the adoption of sustainability as a business strategy.

## **10. Technical and vocational education and training advances sustainable development**

International sustainable development policy and planning and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) policy and planning are now aligning in the green economy and green skills agenda, leading to new research and capacity-building efforts. As a result of international attention, national TVET systems are beginning to recognize the need for change to support greener economic development. Private sector demands for skilled workers in greening traditional industries and serving new green business are also influencing the reorientation of TVET.

## **Challenges**

Despite the successes of the DESD, Member States and other stakeholders have indicated considerable challenges remain in realizing the full potential of ESD. These include the need for further alignment of education and sustainable development sectors; the need to do more work for institutionalizing ESD – to ensure strong political support to implement ESD on a systemic level; and, finally, the need for more research, innovation, monitoring and evaluation to develop and prove the effectiveness of ESD good practices.

# Policy

Leadership matters

## Highlights

Political leadership is crucial for ESD.

ESD is increasingly a part of policies to address sustainable development issues (e.g. climate change).

Sustainable development and education policies are becoming more and more aligned.

ESD has become an important part of the global policy discourse.

## Challenges

Major work remains to ensure full policy coherence between the education sector and the sustainable development sector.

ESD is not integrated coherently across relevant sectorial or sub-sectorial policies.

## ESD Actions around the World

Results from the UNESCO Global Monitoring and Evaluation Questionnaire 2.<sup>1</sup>



80%

of Member States report having appointed an ESD focal point.



66%

of Member States report having a national ESD strategy or plan.



50%

of Member States have a national ESD/DESD coordinating body.



50%

of Member States have included ESD in relevant policies.



29%

of Member States report ESD in legal or regulatory documents.

### Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

The Open Working Group of the UN General Assembly proposed ESD as one of the targets for the education goal for post-2015, noting: 'By 2030 ensure all learners acquire 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' (UN, 2014).

<sup>1</sup> Member States and other stakeholders have contributed extensively to the Global Monitoring and Evaluation process by responding to two questionnaires sent out by UNESCO. Questionnaire 1, 90 Member States and Questionnaire 2, 70 Member States.

# Early Childhood Care and Education

ESD starts with early childhood care and education

## Highlights

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) contributions to ESD have increased, supported by national initiatives, networks of experts and research activities.

ECCE is the foundation for sustainable development and the beginning point for ESD.

Reorienting ECCE towards ESD must begin from birth, and not only through pre-primary school settings, but also in the home and wider community.

Play-based learning for sustainable development contributes to a child's acquisition of social understanding and nature awareness.

## Challenges

ESD in ECCE remains fragmented within and among countries, with considerable variations in the availability, accessibility and quality of programmes.

ECCE educators / primary care-givers lack capacity to incorporate ESD into their teaching / care-giving activities.

## ESD Actions around the World



### The Matarajio project in Kenya's Rift Valley

focused on the environmental legacy of Wangari Maathai, the world-renowned Kenyan environmental activist and Nobel Peace Prize Winner, presented as a strong role model to the children. The children were engaged in sharing and learning about environmental concerns and were involved in a number of practical activities concerning woodland appreciation, preservation and management. The project is being reproduced in many other pre-schools (Siraj-Blatchford, 2014).



### The Starting Young project in Singapore

saw two pre-schools embark on a project to raise awareness of SD among children aged 2 to 6, based on the premise that 'children are capable, resourceful and competent individuals, who can be empowered to become active contributors and agents of change'. The project reached more than 300 children and their families, enhancing their appreciation of nature, raising awareness on SD and giving the children the means and the courage to speak out for the environment and in favour of sustainable practices (Hor, 2014).



### The Leuchtpol project in Germany

involved over 4,000 German kindergartens (10% of all facilities in Germany), using ESD as their educational guiding concept, and has reached over 33,000 children. The educators encouraged 3 to 6 year-old children to learn and engage with energy and environmental issues in a playful manner for instance, by discovering solar and wind power through play and hands-on activities. Six months after the training, 97% of educators participating were convinced that teaching energy conservation to young children is important (UNESCO. 2012c).

# Primary and Secondary Education

Preparing young people for the future

## Highlights

ESD-related topics, initiatives, programmes and projects are increasingly being included in primary and secondary education curricula.	ESD pedagogies encourage teachers to shift away from traditional pedagogical approaches to learner-centered approaches.	ESD in schools contributes to intergenerational learning and sustainable development at the local level.	The whole-school approach represents a higher level of ESD integration.	Certification of teachers and accreditation of teacher education programmes can be important levers for change.
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## Challenges

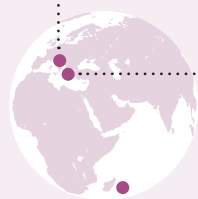
Obstacles to progress in ESD implementation in schools include the absence of clearly articulated ESD strategies and policies and the lack of ESD educator competencies.

ESD implementation requires enhanced capacities among policy-makers, curriculum developers, school leaders, assessment experts and, most importantly, teachers.

## ESD Actions around the World

**2,500** primary school teachers and **1,000** primary school principals have been trained in environmental education in **Albania**.

(GME Q, Albania, MS)<sup>2</sup>

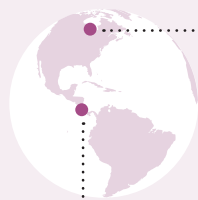


**9,700** ESD projects took place in schools in **Greece** with **19,000** teachers and **235,000** students involved.

(GME Q, Greece, MS)

**250,000** students in **Mauritius** are learning about climate change and the environment in their school lessons.

(Ackbarally, 2013)



More than **181,000** primary and secondary students in the Canadian province of **Manitoba** are learning to live sustainably.

(GME Q, Canada, MS)

**1,860** schools in **Costa Rica** undertook environmental protection actions, up from 225 in 2004.

(GME Q, Costa Rica, MS)

**7,000** teachers took part in ESD teacher training in the Republic of **Korea**.

(GME Q, Republic of Korea, MS)



ESD e-learning teacher materials have been made available to **244,000** teachers (in service) and **430,000** teachers (in pre-service training) in **Viet Nam**.

(UNESCO. 2014d.)

**1,000** schools in 14 provinces in **China** have adopted ESD and became ESD schools.

(GME Q, China, MS)

2

References to Global Monitoring and Evaluation Questionnaire (GME Q) are cited as follows: Member State Responses GME Q <name of country>, MS; Stakeholder Responses GME Q <name of organization>, KS; and United Nations Responses GME Q <name of UN Agency>.

# Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Unlocking the workforce potential for sustainable development

## Highlights

There is convergence between international sustainable development policy and planning and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy and planning (the green economy-green skills agenda).

Knowledge and skills gaps for sustainable development can be filled through not only school-based TVET, but also work-based learning and other non-formal and informal learning.

The reorientation of TVET systems, including curriculum, requires all actors – government, business and industry, and TVET educators – to work together.

Models and tools for reorienting TVET to support sustainable development now exist that recognize the importance not only of the development of skills, but also of mindsets, that can influence change in the workplace and community.

## Challenges

Much remains to be done to accelerate the actual implementation of ESD programmes in both formal and non-formal TVET.

Much less is understood about how TVET in non-formal settings can support transitions to sustainability.

At the national level, the coordination between environment and SD policy and TVET policy remains limited.

Skill shortages impede a smooth transition to green-oriented growth. Changes in occupational profiles and skills for existing jobs that are becoming greener and for new green industries are needed.

## ESD Actions around the World



**Kenya** is reforming its **vocational polytechnic schools** curriculum to develop skills training that supports sustainable livelihoods. (Dubois et al., 2010)



**China's** Ministry of Education has worked with UNEVOC to revise its TVET curriculum to integrate sustainable development and has embarked on **TVET teacher training**, with many TVET schools now developing their own sustainable-development-related courses. (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2009a; 2009b)



**Germany's Vocational Training Institute of the Construction Industry**, North Rhine Westphalia, has made sustainable development compulsory for every apprentice, trainer, expert and member company. (Pavlova, 2007)



**Finland** has incorporated sustainable development into all **52 upper-secondary vocational qualifications**. (UNECE, 2013)



**The Duurzaam MBO network** is supporting **TVET schools and teachers** in the **Netherlands** to integrate ESD as a whole-school approach. (GME Q Duurzaam MBO, KS)

# Higher Education

Graduates for a sustainable future

## Highlights

Higher education has stepped up its efforts to support sustainable development.	Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have made significant efforts to address sustainability in campus operations, supported by the development and sharing of tools and reporting frameworks, followed by various examples of good practice in the reorientation of learning and teaching practices and advances in sustainability research.	New ESD-related specialist programmes/courses are on the rise.	Networks of HEIs build capacity and expand influence on ESD.	HEIs are extending the value and impact of their teaching and research at the local level and catalyzing community change.
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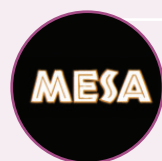
## Challenges

Translation of commitments into implementation requires coordinated change at multiple levels – in governance, planning, academic programmes, facility management and financial systems.	Deeper innovation in staff development and across institutions is necessary to transform curricula and pedagogy.	Disciplinary boundaries continue to be barriers to the exploration of complex issues, and to the preparation of learners with the capacity to address complexity.
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## ESD Actions around the World



Spreading across a network of **370 universities**, the ambition of the **Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES)** is to implement environment and sustainability practices into the curricula. GUPES supports over 10 annual sustainability training programmes involving 300 universities and sustainable development policy-makers.



Through the **Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in Africa (MESA)**, a regional network was created with over **100 academics** from **77 African universities** in **32 African countries**, involving **29 regional and international partners**, to mainstream environment and sustainability into African universities.



**COPERNICUS Alliance** is a European network of **60 members** and project-affiliated institutions committed to ESD.



**Alianza de Redes Iberoamericanas de Universidades por la Sustentabilidad y el Ambiente (ARIUSA)** includes **13 national university networks** representing a total of **228 universities** in **15 countries** in Latin America and the Caribbean.



**Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research Network (ProSPER.Net)** is a network of **30 higher education institutions** in Asia and the Pacific that have committed to work together.

**17** UNESCO ESD Chairs in the world



# Non-Formal Education, Public Awareness Campaigns and Media

ESD is for everyone

## Highlights

Non-formal learning opportunities for sustainable development, such as community volunteering, programmes with outdoor learning centres and other hands-on experiences, have increased over the DESD.

Adult learning and education (ALE) is being recognized in national strategies and planning documents an appropriate means to achieve sustainable development.

Public awareness and media coverage of sustainable development is reported to have improved in many countries.

Social media and online social networks are being used increasingly to raise public awareness on SD.

## Challenges

The provision of ALE remains a challenge and impedes progress on introducing concepts and practices of sustainability to adult learners.

An ESD capacity gap exists within organizations and individuals who work with adult learners.

Increased partnerships between civil society and the public sector are needed in order to align and reinforce resources and actions.

Evidence remains limited on the links between awareness raised and changes made in people's behavior and lifestyles.

## ESD Actions around the World

### EXHIBITIONS

The **Science Express Biodiversity Special**, initiated in 2012 in India, intends to raise awareness and understanding of biodiversity. The biodiversity exhibition may be found aboard the train as well as on the railway platform, giving an element of play and fun to the subject. The 40 communicators present aboard the train have been able to impact approximately **4.6 million visitors over two years, including visits by 10,000 schools**. A survey reports that more than 80% of its visitors showed an increase in their understanding of biodiversity after their visit (Sarabhai and Subramanian, 2014).

### TRAINING

**Solar Power!** Project managed by the NGO, Tostan in Africa is empowering rural women to attend the Barefoot College, where they complete a training programme in solar electrical engineering. These women then return to train other women from neighbouring rural communities in solar electrical engineering, spreading the impact of the programme and providing each engineer with a means of income. The project provides rural communities with a renewable energy source and women emerge as entrepreneurs in their communities, helping to foster sustainable community-led development (Tostan, 2013).

**452 solar panels installed in 9 villages in Senegal. 58 solar engineers have been trained.**

### AWARENESS

The **Global Survey on Sustainable Lifestyles** initiated by UNEP, **surveyed 8,000 young adults aged 18 to 35 from 20 countries** around the world with the aim of gathering data on their vision of a sustainable future. The results found that a majority of them ranked well-being, agency and meaning as the most essential foundations to a sustainable outlook. Most young adults also mentioned the need for a more holistic, compelling and pragmatic vision of what a sustainable society may be like (Abbas et al., 2013).

# Capacity-building and Training

“Know-how” for sustainable development

## Highlights

Large businesses and multinational corporation leaders and managers have an increasing awareness of sustainability, through entry-level formal education at business schools, executive education programmes, workplace training and peer learning in non-formal settings.

Networking and multi-stakeholder learning have been particularly effective in moving the private sector towards sustainability.

Education related to sustainable development has substantially increased in the curriculums of business schools.

Business and industry are now looking beyond learning about the business case for sustainable development towards more technical education and training for implementation of sustainability-related practices.

## Challenges

While 65% of signatories to the UN Global Compact have committed to sustainability at the CEO level, only 35% are training managers to integrate sustainability into business operations.

Technical know-how will not be sufficient to advance the private sector. There needs to be a shift in private sector education and training from teaching general awareness, frameworks and models to developing skills and competencies for critical whole-systems analysis, decision-making and collaborative problem-solving.

There is a need for planned, strategic efforts to undertake training and capacity-building in particular for small, micro and medium sized enterprises.

## ESD Actions around the World

The **UN Global Compact** has grown to more than **10,000 participants**, including over 7,000 businesses in 145 countries around the world. 550 business schools have joined **Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)**.

Close to **200 companies** are members of the **World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)** and participate in its peer learning events. WBCSD raises awareness throughout its regional network, comprising of 66 regional partners (business/industry associations) in 64 countries representing over 35,000 national businesses.

**CSR Asia** has attracted over **70 strategic partners**, in addition to running training courses and building capacity in businesses throughout the region.

The **Latin American Network, Forum Empresa**, brings together 22 corporate social responsibility organizations from 20 countries with **3,339 member firms** to share knowledge and advance sustainability across the region through workshops, webinars and conferences.

# Stakeholders and Partnerships

## Building bridges for ESD

### Highlights

The DESD, with UNESCO as the lead agency, helped UN agencies to act on a shared agenda, and to mobilize other stakeholders to work with the UN on implementation.

At the Member State level, interdepartmental collaboration has advanced ESD.

Inspiring examples of private sector support for ESD in schools, universities and their surrounding communities can be found throughout the world.

National, subnational and local governments often appear to rely on civil society organizations to undertake ESD initiatives. Leveraging these civil society partners has been key to successful implementation in many countries.

Multi-stakeholder approaches are helping to advance whole-system change.

### Challenges

Continued and increased leadership, both by UNESCO and across all UN agencies will be needed to align agendas, scale up mandates for action, mobilize resources and work together.

Civil society organizations would benefit from appropriate frameworks and resources to implement ESD in partnership with the public sector.

Increased capacities among all stakeholders to work in partnership, including improved understandings of the process of social learning and measures to assess and improve outcomes are needed.

### ESD Actions around the World

The **Government of Mongolia** and the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote a sustainable future through ESD. The project will cover all 752 schools, all teacher education institutions and all education departments by 2020, directly benefiting more than **500,000 children** and **26,000 teachers** (SDC, 2013).

In Sri Lanka, **MAS Holdings Eco GO Beyond Schools Sustainable Development Leadership Camp** has helped deliver a Mindset toolkit featuring ESD concepts: Asia-Pacific priorities (such as climate change and food security); project development (to encourage independent learning and action-oriented thinking); and guidance on partnerships (engaging in traditional and non-traditional partners within the public and private sector) (UNESCO, 2009).

The **Emirates Foundation** signed an agreement with the **Ministry of Education** to work in partnership on reforming public school curricula to incorporate sustainability issues as well as financial literacy (WAM, 2014).

The **Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD (RCEs)**, launched by the United Nations University, builds partnerships for thinking globally but acting locally. There are currently **129 RCEs** around the world collaborating with public, private and civil society on themes of sustainable development (Wals, 2014).

# Scaling up action

Our main lesson learned is that ESD can help make the earth a better place to live.

– Key Stakeholder, Lebanon, Questionnaire response.

The DESD has laid a strong foundation to advance sustainable development through education and learning. Much has been achieved, but significant challenges remain. With the growing endorsement of education, including ESD, as an essential component of the post-2015 agenda, there is now the potential for the education sector to work even more closely with the sustainable development community to prepare citizens to build sustainable, respectful societies. However, the institutionalizing of ESD will require strong political leadership. This means leadership at the global, regional, national and local levels will be needed to create the organizational climate necessary for change, to put the resources in place to secure change and to provide encouragement for all actors to experiment, take risks, learn and adapt in order to move societies towards sustainability. In addition, champions will continue to be needed, both institutional and individual, to bring together stakeholders and to sustain efforts in the coming years. Finally, all efforts should be supported with monitoring and evaluation and research, to ensure that reorienting education, training and public awareness towards sustainable development will indeed contribute to achieving societal goals for sustainability.

Member States in every region are greatly encouraged by the momentum that the DESD has created and believe that the DESD has established a solid path to continue this crucial work over the long term. Recognizing the need to sustain momentum and scale up actions, UNESCO Member States have endorsed a Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD with a first phase of five years. At the end of the DESD, Member States are preparing to accelerate, scale up and deepen the transformation of education to make it relevant to today's world.

Lessons from the DESD are informing the GAP's Five Priority Actions Areas. *Priority Action Area one:* Advancing policy will require policy coherence across global, regional, national and local levels aligning education with visions, goals and planning for sustainable development and sustainable development with education. *Priority Action Area two:* Transforming learning and training environments – the delivery of more ESD-relevant content and learning practices to ensure that all learners have the knowledge, attitudes and capacity to respond to the challenges of sustainability throughout their lives is essential. Whole-institution approaches show great promise for instilling fundamental knowledge and attitudes for learning to live and work sustainably. *Priority Action Area three:* Building the capacities of educators and trainers will be necessary to help educators determine how to incorporate ESD into teaching and learning activities. *Priority Action Area four:* Empowering and mobilizing youth – programmes across all levels and areas of education that recognize youth as agents of change and stakeholders in their own future should be advanced. Finally, *Priority Action Area five:* Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level – capacity-building for local school system administrators and local municipal authorities will help to anchor ESD in local contexts, enabling learners to find local sustainability solutions. Civil society organizations, the private sector and the media should be recognized for their important role in supporting formal education through non-formal activities, and through raising public awareness at the local level, with their support secured through planned multi-stakeholder collaborations that focus on local impact.

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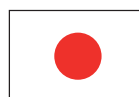
## Shaping the Future We Want

### UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **FINAL REPORT SUMMARY**

Achieving a path to sustainable development is as significant as ever. There is a growing consensus that countries not only need to change policies and technologies, but also ensure that their citizens are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values to make choices that will support living and working sustainably. Education can – and must – play a decisive role in the journey towards sustainable development.

This summary for policy- and decision-makers provides a brief overview of the key findings and trends, highlights and challenges presented in the UNESCO **2014 Global Monitoring and Evaluation Final Report**, *Shaping the Future We Want – UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 2014)*. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) was aimed at advancing education at all levels and in all areas as a critical tool for moving societies towards sustainability. At the end of the DESD, a solid foundation has been laid for Education for Sustainable Development achieved by raising awareness, influencing policies and generating significant numbers of good practice projects in all areas and levels of education and learning.

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