

Education for a Sustainable Future: Meeting an Unmet Demand

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Living in the 21st century presents unprecedented challenges led by rapid technological changes, globalization, and significant development issues. They are reshaping the world at a pace that is eliciting dissonance in the citizens, societies and institutions of the western world. The vast gap between rich and poor continues to grow; unequal societies perform poorly on all forms of social problems and exclusion.

Promisingly, the agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to transform our world and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have fostered global understanding and uplifted hope to better the planet and its people. Given the current environment of unprecedented and uncertain global transition, a vital transformation driven by a need to learn from new knowledge and skills, and even revisit development is required to achieve the SDGs.

Sachs expresses sustainable development as a worldview and also a method of solving global problems. While we have made some progress in both the areas, we have a long way to go. The paper would explore the fundamental system change required to achieve the universal, integrated and indivisible SDGs. It begins with recognizing education as a necessary condition to achieve a sustainable future. Ensuring a learning process that engenders the learners' capacity to analyze, reflect on alternatives, and make values-based ethical choices is a start. It requires skills and ability to negotiate to make sound choices affecting local and global societies, and the ecosphere in the context of inequality and power issues.

Hope for a better quality of life for all and a desire to manifest it in reality as a universal imperative requires interdisciplinary education as an essential mode to meet the demand of behavioral change. Making the content holistic and teaching pluralistic would constitute sustainability to be an integral element of societal and political trends. Not surprisingly, the sustainability researchers have already started to structure their work within the framework of public discourse of science.