

## Workshop 8: The Economic Pillar of Sustainable Development: Educational Approaches

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### **Conference Objective 1: To Highlight the Essential Contribution of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to All of Education and to Achieving Quality Education**

#### **Why is ESD relevant?**

The global economic crisis creates an important Education for Sustainable Development learning opportunity regarding the economic pillar of sustainable development. The crisis and our response to it suggest that the economic pillar is the least developed and the least taught. Moreover, participants underlined that the extent of global poverty, and the feminization of poverty makes the situation very urgent. A workshop participant suggested that "ESD is an antidote to the causes of the crisis."

### **Conference Objective 2: To Promote International Exchange on ESD**

#### **What can we learn from each other?**

Over 60 participants from 41 countries participated in small group discussions on this question. Participants reported many anecdotal cases of ESD in regard to economic initiatives in the various countries, although few examples demonstrated success in making economies more sustainable. It was suggested by some that systematic analysis and case studies of experiences would indicate how and under what conditions ESD could contribute to sustainable economies. Many examples from different countries were presented, including those illustrating the interaction between economic development and formal, non-formal and informal ESD but in general, it was agreed by participants that "the premises and assumption underlying these efforts and how they operated need to be examined further and that it was too early to look for models of success or to measure results."

### **Conference Objective 3: To Carry out a Stock-taking of DESD Implementation**

#### **What have we achieved so far, what are the lessons learnt?**

Workshop participants emphasised that ESD must be dynamic and based on scientific awareness. Moreover, it was highlighted that communities and families must



be involved. It was agreed that economic growth must be distinguished from economic development, of which human development is a critical component. Discussions clearly showed that there is a need for ESD indicators and better use of sustainable development indicators. Finally, participants concluded that economic aspects must be better conceptualized in Education for Sustainable Development.

### **Conference Objective 4: To Develop Strategies for the Way Ahead**

#### **Where do we want to go from here?**

Workshop participants underlined that it is essential to transform the educational system in order to transform economic systems toward sustainability. Concomitantly, transforming the economic system will require transforming the educational system.

It was emphasised that we must transform value systems towards social justice and away from individual (over-)consumption. Participants stated that values for a new sustainable economy – a culture of sustainability – are needed. This has implications for all types of Education for Sustainable Development:

- Formal Education for Sustainable Development (Ministries of Education)
- Non-formal Education for Sustainable Development (businesses and companies)
- Informal Education for Sustainable Development (e.g. the media)

It will also involve knowledge networks, technology for sustainable development, and lifelong learning.

Participants underlined that more dialogue between the ESD community and key economic stakeholders was needed, particularly in business and government, as well as with business educators, economists, and relevant NGOs. Education must not simply serve the (old) economy; ESD must help transform it with new knowledge, skills and values.

### **A Recommendation for UNESCO**

The current global economic crisis has brought into question many of the past economic practices and associated culture and values. There is also a stronger political will to address global change. This combination offers a powerful opportunity for UNESCO, as the

lead agency for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, to be a stronger voice of the ESD community and to promote both economic and educational transformation that will enhance sustainable development.

This will entail creating the knowledge, skills, and values appropriate to a sustainability economy by increasing public awareness and understanding. It will also entail transforming education as learning systems, including formal education, training, professional development, non-formal and informal learning – placing all of these within a framework of lifelong learning.

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