



Group of children with adults in a wooded habitat in Cuba.

“As UNESCO seeks to tackle poverty through human enlightenment, our business is to promote education for all, to enhance scientific understanding of environment issues or social transformations, to protect cultural diversity, and to foster greater access for all to the knowledge societies.”

— Koichiro Matsuura  
Director-General of UNESCO

## UNESCO'S CONTRIBUTION TO ENHANCING GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

### Main thematic areas

- Educating for sustainability, including both formal and non-formal education, alternative delivery systems to reach the unreached, and training and capacity-building in fields related to sustainable development.
- Science for sustainable development, including the promotion of multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches, involving the natural as well as social and human sciences, to the wise use of natural resources and to the improved understanding of human-environment relationships.
- Ethical principles and guidelines for sustainable development, including the promotion of principles, policies and ethical norms to guide scientific and technological development that is sustainable.
- Integrating culture, cultural diversity and the world heritage as key dimensions in activities aimed at sustainable development.
- Contributing to sustainable development through the media and information and communication technologies.

## EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

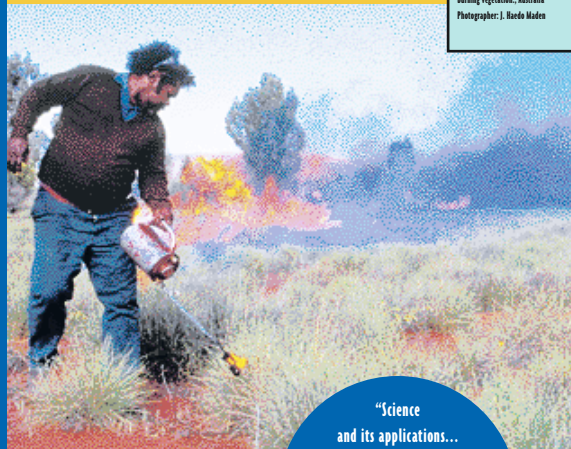
Education is not an end in itself. It is a key instrument for bringing about the changes in knowledge, values, behaviours and lifestyles required to achieve sustainability and stability within and among countries, democracy, human security and peace.

ESD encompasses all forms and all levels of education, as reflected in the work programme on education, public awareness and training of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development to promote Chapter 36 of Agenda 21.

As inter-agency task manager for Chapter 36, UNESCO has a particular responsibility to develop new inter-agency partnerships on education for sustainability, including innovative demonstration projects.

- A prerequisite for sustainable development is Education for All, as reflected in the six goals adopted at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000.
- Expand early childhood care and education;
- Free and compulsory education of good quality by 2015;
- Promote the acquisition of life-skills by adolescents and youth;
- Expand adult literacy by 50% by 2015;
- Eliminate gender disparities by 2005 and achieve gender equality in education by 2015;
- Enhance educational quality;
- Achieve universal primary education and ensure that all girls and boys complete a full course of primary schooling;
- Promote gender equality and empower women, eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

Photo: Aboriginal flame-thrower, burning vegetation, Australia  
Photographer: J. Huerto Maden



“Science and its applications... indispensable foundation for economic, social, cultural and environmentally sound development.”

UNESCO-ICSU World Conference on Science, Budapest, June 1999

## UNESCO'S CONTRIBUTION

Through its five intergovernmental science undertakings...

- **International Geological Correlation Programme**, facilitating geoscience co-operation in the service of society;
- **International Hydrological Programme**, UNESCO's intergovernmental scientific programme on water resources;
- **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission**, furthering knowledge about the oceans and their resources;
- **Man and the Biosphere Programme**, with its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (408 sites in 94 countries) and its concern with people living in and caring for the biosphere.
- **Management of Social Transformations** promoting international, comparative policy-relevant research on contemporary social transformations and issues of global importance.

...Underpinned with **capacity building** in many areas related to sustainable development: renewable energies, freshwater issues, role of oceans in the whole earth system, integrated approaches to biodiversity conservation and resource management, biotechnologies, local and indigenous knowledge systems.

## CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

People's attitudes and lifestyles, their responsiveness to educational programmes, their desire to preserve a decent future for ensuing generations, the reactions of national and local leaders to scientific and governance policy advice, are all intimately linked to their own cultural identities and values. No worldwide commitment to sustainable development will get anywhere without that recognition.

### Priorities

- **Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity**, predicated on the consideration of culture as a fully-fledged resource for development.
- **Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage**, with its list of properties of unique and universal value: 721 sites — 544 cultural, 144 natural and 23 mixed — in 124 countries.
- **United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage (2002)**, for which UNESCO is lead agency, with the themes of reconciliation and development as the focus of its activities.
- **Intangible and oral heritage**, embracing all forms of traditional and popular or folk culture.

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