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## 4. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Embarking on the path of sustainable development will require a profound transformation of how we think and act. To create a more sustainable world and to engage with sustainability-related issues as described in the SDGs, individuals must become sustainability change-makers. They require the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development.

Education, therefore, is crucial for the achievement of sustainable development. However, not all kinds of education support sustainable development. Education that promotes economic growth alone may well also lead to an increase in unsustainable consumption patterns. The now well-established approach of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations.

ESD aims at developing competencies that empower individuals to reflect on their own actions, taking into account their current and future social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts, from a local and a global perspective. Individuals should also be empowered to act in complex situations in a sustainable manner, which may require them to strike out in new directions; and to participate in socio-political processes, moving their societies towards sustainable development. ESD has to be understood as an integral part of quality education, inherent in the concept of lifelong learning. Thus, ESD does not only integrate contents such as climate change, poverty and sustainable consumption into the curriculum; it also creates interactive, learner-centered teaching and learning settings. What ESD requires is a shift from teaching to learning. It asks for an action-oriented, transformative pedagogy, which supports self-directed learning, participation and collaboration, problem-orientation, inter- and transdisciplinary and the linking of formal and informal learning. Only such pedagogical approaches make possible the development of the key competencies needed for promoting sustainable development.

Education for Sustainable Development means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behavior and take action for sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way. Education for Sustainable Development requires far-reaching changes in the way education is often practiced today. UNESCO is the lead agency for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) that was extended for another decade. As we get closer to the 2030 SDG agenda, it has become clear that achieving the UN SDGs is far from possible without the education sector's significant involvement in the cause. Education for Sustainable Development (EDS) has been recognized as an integral contributor to achieving several SDGs.