

Preface

Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” – is not only key to the achievement of many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also the bedrock of any society. In examining the targets of all of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is clear that education can provide a valuable means of supporting their implementation and achievement.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) provides a valuable framework and methodology to support the implementation and achievement of the SDGs, as it promotes the inclusion of key sustainable development issues in teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. As the 2010 Report of the Council of the European Union states: “ESD is essential for the achievement of a sustainable society and is therefore desirable at all levels of formal education and training, as well as in non-formal and informal learning.”

Education for Sustainable Development consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way, and will ultimately help empower a learning society with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and responsible actions for the promotion of environmental integrity and economic viability while respecting cultural diversity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a dent in the progress made in the achievement of SDGs across Asia and Europe. The pandemic and the evolving geopolitical discourse on social, environmental and climate issues have impelled countries to take steps to redouble efforts to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially those furthest behind.

There are evident differences between European and Asian states in terms of the achievement of the sustainable goals. However, both continents are faced with the common challenge of reducing the environmental impacts of connectivity without neglecting the economic and financial sustainability aspects, while at the same time ensuring that benefits will accrue to society at large. Cooperation and collaboration between the two regions are vital for the achievements of the SDGs and it is imperative that states in the two regions exchange their best practices and lessons learned.

It is therefore necessary to analyse and reflect on how countries across Europe and Asia are implementing ESD in the achievement of SDGs and to analyse its impacts. This edition of *Panorama*, “Education for Sustainable Development in Asia and Europe: A comparative Perspective”, will address precisely such questions.

In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to learn from each region’s experiences as well as to compare experiences so as to determine how the various initiatives and programmes can be synergised to ensure that there is equitable and inclusive education for all and that no one is left behind. This issue of our journal provides a window into the different experiences and steps taken by various countries across Asia and Europe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andreas Klein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andreas" and the last name "Klein" clearly distinguishable.

Andreas Klein
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