Best Practices in Education for Sustainable Development Pedagogy and Curriculum
Summary of Virtual Side Event at the 2024 ECOSOC Partnership Forum
30 Jan 2024, 8:15am-9:30am EST

Event Background:

The aim of this virtual side event, entitled *"Best Practices in Education for Sustainable Development Pedagogy and Curriculum,"* is to delve into the transformative potential of integrating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into curriculums and communities. Hosted by Global Schools, an initiative of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the event sought to spotlight the initiatives of educators and advocates featured in the guidebook, "Practicing Education for Sustainable Development: Case Study Guide for Educators, Volume 2." The event provided a platform for featured advocates, including Serafin Cristobal, Handrich Hernando, Geoffrey Holt, Stephanie Arias Catalán, Lydia Chinonye Chilaka, Pankaj Rathore, and Oluwasegun Ogunsakin, to share their firsthand experiences integrating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their curricula. Their presentations showcased the diverse projects detailed in the guidebook, offering insights into how ESD contributes to the achievement of global sustainability goals and demonstrating the crucial role of education in achieving sustainable development. The ultimate culmination of the event was the launch of the guidebook, providing a tangible resource for educators who are looking to integrate ESD into their curricula and local communities.

Key issues discussed:
- Stephanie Arias Catalán emphasizes the efficacy of a project-based learning approach for teaching sustainable development. Her students created comics illustrating the impact of human activities on water sources (SDG 14), leading to a beach clean-up field trip. Her hands-on projects, like comics, foster a deeper understanding of SDGs and encourage active environmental participation.
- Lydia introduces SDGs through an engaging game and a mural project featuring all SDG graphics. Encouraging resourcefulness due to financial constraints, her SDG club repurposes spare materials for activities, resulting in awards and grants. Lydia's inclusive and creative activities enhance student engagement and empower them to address SDGs despite limited resources.
- Ogunsakin, while teaching primary school, stresses the importance of language and local context in ESD integration. Practical exercises like gardening make ESD applicable to students' lives. The mindful inclusion of local context and hands-on exercises enhance students' connection to ESD and improves student buy-in.
- Pankaj Rathore, Vice Principal at Seth Anandram Jaipuria School, incorporates SDGs school-wide, using morning assemblies and mandated integration of SDGs into all subjects. Emphasizing SDGs in arts creates memorable learning experiences, and

involving families fosters a community dedicated to sustainable development. The holistic integration of SDGs enhances student awareness and community commitment.

- Rafi Cristobal directs the Social Impact and Sustainability Program at the Harbour School in Hong Kong. Experiential learning at the Black Dolphin (a local ship in the harbor), The Foundry (a makerspace), and a Marine Science Center enriches students' understanding of ocean literacy. Providing diverse, experiential-learning opportunities reinforces understanding and appreciation for sustainability.
- Geoffrey Holt, teaching in an Australian school with a low-socioeconomic index, integrates ESD by addressing local environmental challenges. Students collaborate with experts to build animal sanctuaries and prevent dieback spread, fostering increased environmental appreciation and indigenous cultural awareness. Geoffrey stresses that leveraging local challenges enhances student involvement in ESD and promotes teamwork.

Key recommendations for action:
- Implement project-based learning to enable students to actively engage with and understand the SDGs; and foster a deeper connection with key concepts.
- Incorporate SDGs into all subjects, such as the performing arts, to create a holistic approach to sustainable development and to reinforce its relevance.
- Ensure that activities are mindful of students' local context to increase relevancy and buy-in.
- Utilize available resources and the local environment to overcome financial constraints and find innovative ways to implement ESD.
- Involve families and locals to create a community dedicated to sustainable development.