



APCEIU

Association of
Multicultural Universities

Two Concepts One Goal

Education for International Understanding and
Education for Sustainable Development





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S. Baker, D. Riewpituk, T. Siribodhi, LC. Tan,
H. Schmid, S. Rungmanee, S. Chaiyasook and STU

Two Concepts, One Goal: Education for International Understanding and Education for Sustainable Development



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(1) H. Schmid
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(4) H. Schmid
(5) LC.Tan
(6) M. Lee

Education for International Understanding

The devastation after the two World Wars stirred a desire for global peace and understanding. The end of the Cold War in the latter part of the last century revived a fresh wave of optimism for a new millennium of peace. However, this hope was confounded by other inter-regional, inter-racial, inter-cultural and inter-religious conflicts and confrontations. In addition, globalization brought its own share of uncertainty and unpredictability to international affairs and economic governance. Trans-national movements of workers and refugees increased tensions between local communities and migrants. Continuing loss of natural resources and degradation of the environment added to the woes of societies in turmoil.

Against this backdrop, the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCIEU) was established to promote Education for International Understanding (EIU). It aims to instil a culture of peace that encompasses individuals, communities, nations, international/global systems and a sustainable relationship between humanity and nature.

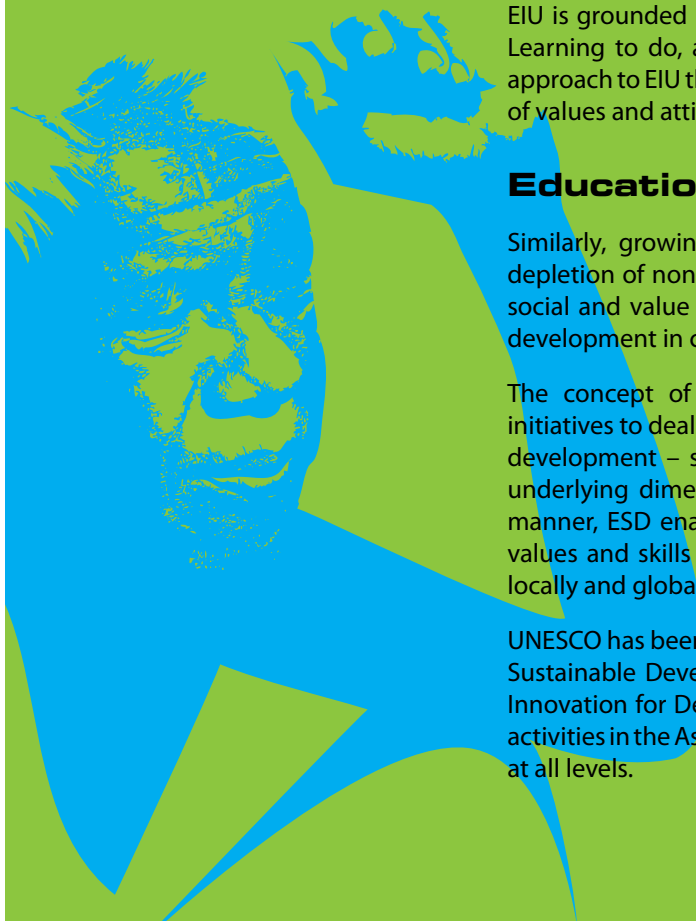
EIU is grounded by the four pillars of learning – Learning to be, Learning to know, Learning to do, and Learning to live together. APCEIU emphasizes a pedagogical approach to EIU that integrates knowledge and understanding with the development of values and attitudes underpinning a culture of peace.

Education for Sustainable Development

Similarly, growing concern about the state of our environment and continuing depletion of non-renewable resources has led to fundamental questions about our social and value systems, and the connection between education and sustainable development in changing lifestyles, behaviours and values.

The concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) builds on past initiatives to deal with these concerns by addressing the three aspects of sustainable development – society, environment and economy – with culture as an essential underlying dimension. By embracing these elements in a holistic and integrated manner, ESD enables all individuals to fully develop the knowledge, perspectives, values and skills necessary to take part in decisions to improve the quality of life, locally and globally.

UNESCO has been charged to spearhead the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) in UNESCO Bangkok is the focal point for ESD activities in the Asia and Pacific region, working in partnership with many stakeholders at all levels.



Synergies between EIU and ESD

EIU and ESD are not dogmas but evolving concepts that can contribute to social learning and transformation. EIU and ESD share many common issues, supporting each other's scope of work and focus. This series of information sheets has been prepared to highlight key complementary areas and synergies.

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UNESCO Bangkok

Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational
Innovation for Development (APEID)
920 Sukhumvit Road
Prakanong, Bangkok 10110
Thailand
Tel: 66-2-3910577
Fax: 66-2-3910866
E-mail: bangkok@unescobkk.org
Website: www.unescobkk.org

APCEIU

50-16 Myeong-Dong-2-Ga,
Jung-gu, Seoul 100-810
Republic of Korea
Tel: 82-2-7743956
Fax: 82-2-7443958
E-mail: info@unescoapceiu.org
Website: www.unescoapceiu.org

Education for International Understanding (EIU) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)



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(5) S. Rungmanee
(6) D. Riewpituk

On Human Rights Education

Several global conferences during the 1990s highlighted human rights issues, especially those affecting women and children, health, population, habitat and environment. In particular, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna led to the establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the adoption of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004).

Human rights are commonly understood as inherent individual and communal rights of all human beings without distinction of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, with the following key characteristics:

- Human rights are founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each person
- Human rights are universal, meaning that they are applied equally and without discrimination to all people
- Human rights are inalienable, in that no one can have his or her human rights taken away other than in specific situations, for example, the right to liberty can be restricted if a person is found guilty of a crime by a court of law
- Human rights are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, for the reason that it is insufficient to respect some human rights and not others

The United Nations World Programme for Human Rights Education defines human rights education as education, training and information aim at building a universal culture of human rights through the sharing of knowledge, imparting of skills and moulding of attitudes directed at:

- strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms
- full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity
- promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups
- enabling all persons to participate effectively in a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law
- building and maintenance of peace
- promotion of people-centred sustainable development and social justice

Human rights education has been formally adopted by some countries in the Asia-Pacific region, although many see it as part of existing education programmes, such as civic education, moral studies, legal education, religious education, values education, peace education, gender and development education. While these are important, they may not necessarily lead to learning about human rights, learning how to uphold human rights and learning through practicing human rights.

Synergies between EIU and ESD

Noting that the traditional view of human rights covering only civil and political rights is too limited in scope, both Education for International Understanding (EIU) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) emphasize a more multi-dimensional and holistic approach to incorporate social, economic and cultural rights, including the rights to an adequate standard of living; education; work and equal pay for equal work; the rights of minorities to enjoy their own cultures, religions and languages; and the rights of disadvantaged and minority groups.

Both EIU and ESD promote education as the most effective means to understand, respect and exercise human rights. EIU functions under a framework of education for a culture of peace, stressing the need for freedom of thought, conscience, belief, equality, justice and love. ESD highlights the need for educational opportunities for all to recognize and value human rights in order to change lifestyles, behaviours and values necessary for a sustainable future.

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UNESCO Bangkok

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Innovation for Development (APEID)
920 Sukhumvit Road
Prakanong, Bangkok 10110
Thailand
Tel: 66-2-3910577
Fax: 66-2-3910866
E-mail: bangkok@unescobkk.org
Website: www.unescobkk.org

APCEIU

50-16 Myeong-Dong-2-Ga,
Jung-gu, Seoul 100-810
Republic of Korea
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Fax: 82-2-7443958
E-mail: info@unescoapceiu.org
Website: www.unescoapceiu.org

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On Environmental Education

Concerns about the uncontrolled use and degradation of our environment surfaced during the last fifty years, leading to a recommendation at a United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 for UNESCO and other agencies to establish a programme in environmental education. Three years later, the International Environmental Education Programme (IEEP) was launched in Belgrade. IEEP, a global programme managed by UNESCO and UNEP from 1975 to 1995, had a broad range of objectives to impart knowledge and raise awareness about our environment in the following areas:

- Access to information
- Research and experimentation
- Educational programmes and teaching materials
- Training of personnel
- Technical and vocational education
- Educating and informing the public
- General university education
- Special training
- International and regional cooperation

Efforts to develop and implement environmental education intensified and resulted in 1990-2000 being designated as the "World Decade for Environmental Education", with an emphasis on inter-relationships between the people and the environment, and the need to balance socio-economic progress with stewardship of our natural resources.

However, environmental education developed with a focus more on nature than on the social, economic and political components. In its wake, the concept of sustainable development gained ground with the publication of *Our Common Future*, a report by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. The 1992 Earth Summit, a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, formulated 27 principles for achieving sustainable development. As a guideline for sustainable development, Agenda 21 also highlighted the role of education in realizing desirable development, values and attitudes. The Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002 expanded this vision to include social justice and poverty reduction, since peace, health and democracy are equally important. In concert with the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All, the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) was proposed, signifying that education is critical for achieving sustainable development.

Synergies between EIU and ESD

Even if environmental education has been perceived to be limited in scope, the essence of environmental education implies cultivating a respect for our environment, and thus the teaching of values, rights and learning to live in harmony with nature and human kind. This important aspect of environmental education is a major theme for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Education for International Understanding (EIU).

ESD is conceptualized by many people in the context of environmental education. However, ESD is not education *about* environment or sustainable development, but rather education *for* sustainable development that includes learning about values, human rights, good governance, economics and culture. Similarly, EIU values education as a means to inculcate a culture of peace, respect for others, freedom of thought, conscience, belief, equality, justice and love. Both EIU and ESD recognize the need for educational opportunities for all to learn and practise enduring lifestyles, behaviours and values necessary to respect our environment and understand the many inter-linked issues in our world. Environmental education within the context of EIU and ESD is therefore important to ensure that current and future generations will use and manage our environment and resources in a sustainable manner.

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Innovation for Development (APEID)
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Thailand
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On Peace Education

The hope for world peace was revived with the ending of the Cold War in the late 1980s. However, this was replaced by new political, racial, cultural and religious conflicts and confrontations. Globalization has brought about its share of discontent, uncertainty and unpredictability that have escalated and spread rapidly with the aid of modern information and communication technologies.

However, peace is more than the absence of war: it involves a set of values, attitudes and behaviours that can be taught, developed, and improved upon to enhance mutual understanding and conflict resolution. Though the concept of a “culture of peace” is not new, it was first vocalized in 1989 during the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men, in Yamoussoukro, Côte d’Ivoire. It laid the foundation for UNESCO’s “Towards a Culture of Peace” programme in 1997, and the declaration for 2000 to be the “International Year for the Culture of Peace”. The United Nations General Assembly further proclaimed 2001-2010 as the “International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World”, urging governments to lead the way for long-term commitment in the pursuit of world peace.

To attain a culture of peace requires both transformation of institutional practices, as well as individual values and behaviours such as non-violence, respect of others, solidarity, openness and tolerance for differences and diversities. The culture of peace is intrinsically linked to conflict prevention and resolution at its source – including non-military threats to peace and security, for example, exclusion, extreme poverty and environmental degradation – through dialogue, negotiation, mediation and reconciliation.

The Asia and Pacific region, home to more than half of the world’s population of diverse races and minority groups, traditions, cultures, religions and languages, has witnessed numerous incidents of discrimination and conflict. It is therefore important to teach, learn and put into practice values that will enable people to live peacefully with others from different backgrounds. Peace education that promotes understanding, tolerance and friendship is critical in creating awareness, mobilizing resources and infusing appropriate values into our society now and in the future.



Synergies between EIU and ESD

Peace education is an intrinsic part of Education for International Understanding (EIU) under the framework established by the "Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy" at the 44th International Conference on Education in Geneva in 1994. Given the considerable interconnections between various dimensions of conflicts and issues of sustainability, peace education is also an important component of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Both EIU and ESD seek to build a sustainable world that transcends violence, unsustainable relationships and systems, injustices and conflicts. To achieve this goal, both EIU and ESD aim to use innovative methodologies and pedagogical approaches to address the root causes of these problems holistically, encourage open dialogue, nurture positive values and empower current and future generations to live together harmoniously.

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Thailand
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Website: www.unescobkk.org

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(5-6) S. Chaiyasook

On Gender Equality

The roles and relationships between women and men are determined by socio-cultural, religious, political and economic factors. The concept of gender also includes the expectations of characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men which may vary within and between cultures. They are not biologically pre-determined, but are learned and can be modified over time.

Gender equality exemplifies the belief that women and men are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid roles and prejudices. Given existing status and practices, gender equality cannot be achieved without gender equity – the process of being fair to both women and men. Through gender equity, measures to compensate for historical and social disadvantages will help to ensure that all behaviours, aspirations, needs, opportunities and rights of both women and men are considered, valued, and favoured equally. These measures must address policies, laws, procedures, norms, beliefs, practices and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality. Equity is a means; equality is the result.

The United Nations had convened an International Women's Conference in Mexico in 1975 to coincide with the International Women's Year. That led to the declaration of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) and to three more International Women's Conferences which took place in Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995. Global dialogues on gender equality have gained prominence, and the importance of gender equality is reflected in many international initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All (EFA), where three of the six EFA goals specifically address education for girls and women.

For gender equality to become a reality, opportunities and resources must be available to enable women to participate on equal terms with their male peers. Gender equality can only be achieved through partnership between women and men to bring about transformation of expectations, attitudes, behaviours, roles and responsibilities at home, in the workplace and community. Both women and men must be empowered to bring about such changes, supported by necessary modifications of institutional practices and social relations. They have to be joint agents of change in all spheres of society, including participation in decision-making process and access to power, as noted in the Beijing Declaration in 1995.

Synergies between EIU and ESD

Education for International Understanding (EIU) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) recognize the importance of promoting gender equality in and through education. As a holistic and multi-dimensional framework, EIU covers many themes and issues with implications on gender equity and gender equality education. It emphasizes education that contributes to overcoming all forms of discrimination, cultivating active citizenship and enhancing democratic participation.

Similarly, sustainable development requires the full involvement of men and women in ensuring social, economic, cultural and environmental vitality. ESD promotes education that enhances the full and equal participation of women in sustainable development decision-making to ensure equitable access to and control over resources and economic opportunities.

Both EIU and ESD aim to strengthen national capacities to plan, implement and monitor policies and programmes that mainstream gender concerns and correct disparities in their vision for a society that is fair and sustainable.

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Website: www.unescoapceiu.org

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Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational
Innovation for Development (APEID)

920 Sukhumvit Road
Prakanong, Bangkok 10110 Thailand
E-mail: bangkok@unescoibkk.org
Website: www.unescoibkk.org
Tel: +66-2-3910577 Fax: +66-2-3910866

APCEIU
Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for
International Understanding

50-16 Myeong-Dong-2-Ga,
Jung-gu, Seoul 100-810 Republic of Korea
E-mail: info@unescoapceiu.org
Website: www.unescoapceiu.org
Tel: +82-2-7743956 Fax: +82-2-7743957