

Greening Curriculum

The global climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable consumption patterns demand a rethinking of traditional education systems. A green curriculum integrates climate mitigation and adaptation into teaching and learning across pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary education, as well as in teacher training. It emphasises the interconnections between the environment, economy, and society, engaging students across cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural domains to inspire action for sustainability. By involving teachers, policymakers, and communities, we can create education systems that empower learners to make meaningful changes for a better future.

This initiative is more than just updating textbooks; it's about transforming education to inspire sustainable thinking and actions at every level. It involves embracing a lifelong learning approach that integrates climate education into school curricula, technical and vocational education, workplace skills development, teaching materials, pedagogy, and assessment.



The objectives of this approach are to highlight the importance of integrating sustainability into education systems and to share innovative, scalable practices for sustainability education across the region. The Green Curriculum session brought together experts to discuss sustainability education across India and South and Southeast Asia, highlighting key insights and initiatives. The session was attended by around 40 participants.

Speakers

- Dr Ram Boojh Yadav, Advisor, Mobius Foundation
- Ms Madhavi Joshi, SASEANEE Director and Senior Programme Director, CEE
- Mr Abhinav Kumar, UNESCO, Programme Coordinator of Education Sector, Delhi
- Dr Kavita Sharma, Prof Department of Elementary Education (DEE), NCERT
- Ms Kunali Sanghvi, Learning Innovation Specialist, Researcher, and Enthusiast
- Ms Subarna Sivapalan, Associate Professor of Education / Associate Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in University of Nottingham Malaysia
- Mr Bidhan Chandra Pal, Founder and Managing Director, Probha Aurora, Bangladesh
- Dr Muzailin Affan, Director at International Office, Syiah Kuala University, Indonesia and Assistant Professor in the Department of Informatics

Presentations and Key Messages

Mr Abhinav Kumar (UNESCO, Delhi) discussed Greening Curriculum Guidance, focusing on integrating climate change education across all educational levels. He emphasised the need for a holistic approach like the Green School Quality Standard, stating that "70% of young people say they aren't climate ready based on their education and 47% of curriculum frameworks in 100 countries don't mention climate change."

Dr Kavita Sharma (NCERT, Delhi) explored the role of curriculum in improving sanitation education through the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan (SBA) programme. She shared findings on the current status in schools, highlighting the need for further integration of eco-friendly practices to raise awareness and sustainability.

Ms Kunali Sanghvi (PhD, Walden University) stressed the importance of whole-school approaches and action-oriented strategies for ESD and CCE. She called for more research in South Asia, proposing a qualitative study of exemplary schools to explore how sustainability education can address eco-anxiety and foster eco-social innovation, specifically addressing the sense of urgency and climate anxiety among youth.

Ms Subarna Sivapalan (UNESCO, University of Nottingham) discussed Malaysia's Higher Education Blueprint and the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships in advancing ESD and the SDGs. She also shared her experiences from Project Asli to demonstrate how community engagement can drive sustainability.

Mr Bidhan Pal (Probha Aurora) highlighted Environmental Education (EE) integration in Bangladesh's General Science and Social Science curriculum, noting the need for a more coherent and interdisciplinary approach to address emerging challenges like climate change.

Mr Muzailin Affan (Syiah Kuala University) shared university-level approaches to sustainability education in Indonesia.

Session Highlights

- Increased understanding of the principles and practices of curriculum greening.
- Learnings from case studies and best practices from the region.
- Sharing references and resources of related to green curriculum
- A strengthened network of stakeholders committed to promoting sustainability education., SASEANEE connect website introduced and shared with participants

Key Recommendations from the Session

- Need for a holistic approach- Whole School Approach
- Engaging students in eco-social innovation and action
- Limited research of environment education in the South Asia region
- Lack of consensus on how ESD and CCE can be implemented
- Contributing to ESD and CCE Research in Indian and South Asian contexts-Empirical research on how ESD gets implemented in the cultural and geographical contexts of India and South Asia is important because this region is the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.
- Multistakeholder partnerships are vital for accelerating impactful outcomes to meet these SDG goals

- Strengthening collaborations between schools and Universities
- Develop digital content and teacher training platforms, such as FEE Academy, SASEANEE and OCE's upcoming platform with Probha Aurora
- Need of education on WASH practices in Indian schools
- Revising the curriculum to adopt an interdisciplinary approach
- Empowerment of Indigenous community leaders and youths as sustainability champions
- Development of Indigenous environmental entrepreneurship programs and skills amongst Indigenous women and youth through community recycling, handicrafts, and hydroponics cultivation

Resources

- UNESCO Resources on- Greening curriculum guidance - how to integrate climate change and sustainability issues into the curriculum. Green school quality standard – establishes quality standards for green schools
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000390028.locale=en>
- The Malaysian Higher Education Blueprint
- Project Asli Perak Routledge publication- Book Chapter: Community education and partnerships for sustainable development: A way forward for Indigenous Asia Sivapalan, S & Subramaniam, G (2020)
The challenges faced in implementing community education and partnerships for sustainability within the Orang Asli of Peninsula Malaysia, and insights into ways in which these challenges can be collectively addressed through Indigenous community-academia-industry-government-NGO partnerships, are discussed.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mk1s8m4UUYE>
- SASEANEE website <https://saseanee.org/>

Referred Case Studies

- The Greening Curriculum Guidance, UNESCO Supports countries to integrate climate change education into curriculum, Uses a holistic approach to education for sustainable development, considering social, economic, and environmental issues. Addresses the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural domains, with a particular emphasis on action. Major findings from Greening Curriculum Guidance pilot in India showed ratio of presence of environment, social and economic indicators
- Study on Project Asli, Malaysia Example of Indigenous community from a particular community where the dropout rates were high. Co-creating knowledge and social impact via rural electrification, rural sanitation, Indigenous entrepreneurship, and Indigenous women and youth empowerment initiatives
- Sustainability and Transformational Education Research Cluster (STERC): The School of Education's Sustainability and Transformational Education Research Cluster (STERC) aspires to be a leader for research in education within the Asia Pacific region, with a broad commitment to investigating issues within formal, informal and community education contexts and its interlinkages.
- Role of Probha Aurora as an NGO - working both locally and globally, they are developing strategic approaches that contribute to integrating green principles into the curriculum in Bangladesh, promoting environmental awareness and sustainable education. Exploring

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collaborations with UNESCO, Greening Education Partnership (GEP) and Government bodies, Meeting held between TTPC delegation and NCTB Chairman on including single-use plastics (SUPs) in textbooks.

- Several Indonesian universities have integrated green curricula and promote sustainability and environmental awareness among students. USK has integrated sustainability into its curriculum through various initiatives, including the Eco Campus Sustainability Action Nexus (ESCAN). This initiative, launched in collaboration with the Green Growth Asia Foundation, aims to embed sustainability into every aspect of academic life. The program focuses on greening education, nurturing green talent, promoting green living, and fostering partnerships for sustainability.