

International Conference on Education as a Driver for Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 4.7b – Environmental Education, Ethics and Action: Re-imagining critical skills for sustainable lifestyles and global citizenship

Ethics is a complex word used in a variety of ways in different contexts. For educational purposes, ethics is a process of engagement in relation to wider questions of what is a good life, what is in the common interest, responsibilities towards future generations, and how to enable the moral impulse. At the same time ethics are most effective when socially contextualized and action-oriented. Working from this conception of ethics the following recommendations were developed:

Recommendations:

- Ethics underpin all SDGs. Reactions to the SDGs are, fundamentally, based in ethics. Educational activities should give strong emphasis to this dimension across all areas of education and training and particularly in teacher training.
- As ethics are implicit in all collective decisions; making ethical considerations explicit in educational programmes can teach effective decision-making skills.
- Ethics education should not be reduced to empty moralising, but should be viewed as a mindful process of reflexive use of language, thought, and action in the world.
- Use real life events and stories to help contextualise ethics, and make ethics-led learning relevant, in other words: make ethics come alive.
- Social critique is an integral part of ethical deliberation, but ethics should also enable the re-imagining of new possibilities for social and environmental practices. For example, ethics can help imagine the emergence of just, equitable and socio-ecologically sustainable societies, and alternative economies that consider wealth creation not just in terms of personal gain but also in their social and societal contexts.
- Ethics enquiries are not quantifiable by conventional systems of measurement and evaluation, yet they are of paramount importance and value and require significant educational attention despite challenges posed by evaluation.