The Sustainability Starts with Teachers is a collaborative capacity building programme for teacher educators on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Southern Africa. The project builds on the existing capacity base for ESD in the Southern African region and links existing and expanding ESD capacity to the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA)’s ESD programme of work, which is aligned with the Southern African Development Community Education Sector goals.

Focusing on the region’s educators to implement changes towards sustainable development, the programme will have the catalytic effect of enabling the next generation of teachers to integrate sustainable development into their teaching and community practice, contributing to the achievement of educational quality and relevance in Southern Africa.

The programme is a partnership programme.
UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO’s top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations’ specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.

The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations’ specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.
Sustainability Starts with Teachers

Capacity Building Programme for Teacher Educators on Education for Sustainable Development (CAP-ESD)

Introduction and Overview
Acknowledgements

This text was first developed for a Japanese Funds in Trust partnership project between UNESCO, the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), Rhodes University and the Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development (SWEDESD). It was initially developed for Secondary Education teacher educators and was produced in 2017 as VERSION 1, with the following reference:

Version 1, May 2017

In 2019, this text was substantively revised to form a Version 2 of the programme. The focus of Version 2 is Teacher Education for Early Childhood Development (ECD), Primary Education, Secondary Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The VERSION 2 reference is:


The ‘Sustainability Starts with Teachers’ programme is implemented as a partnership between the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, Rhodes University’s Environmental Learning Research Centre, the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) and the Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development (SWEDESD). The project is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

Copyright © UNESCO/Rhodes University
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A focus on Sustainable Development</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Education for Sustainable Development?</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the SST Course for?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Action Learning Programme with a Change Project at the centre</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is an ESD Change Project?</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the Programme</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Actions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Action 1</strong>: Review context, policy and progress related to 21st century teaching competences</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Action 2</strong>: Identify relevant content related to SD in local context, the SDGs and other critical issues for teacher education and TVET ESD programmes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Action 3</strong>: Develop and pilot transformative learning processes and learning environments</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Action 4</strong>: Design and try out assessment methods for significant learning and ESD</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Action 5</strong>: Monitor and evaluate programmes, and scale for impact</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction
‘Sustainability Starts with Teachers’ is a regional programme that falls within UNESCO’s ‘Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs’ or ‘ESD for 2030’ programme. It aims to support capacity building for southern African teacher educators in Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Education, and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), to respond to regional sustainable development concerns and opportunities, the Africa 2063 Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In this programme, you and your teacher education/TVET institution (TEI) will be supported to work on developing an **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Change Project** that will model best practice for ESD in your country, in the SADC region, on the African continent, and internationally.

**AN EXAMPLE:**
Addressing gender-based water quality, access and supply concerns via Teacher Education/TVET programmes could be a good ESD Change Project. On the SST programme we will ask, ‘How can ESD issues such as this be integrated into your Teacher Education or TVET programmes?’

Ministries of Education and Higher Education institutions from eleven SADC countries (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, eSwatini, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) are key partners in the initiative. The programme will be implemented over four years, involving clusters of southern African countries:

- **Year 1:** Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia
- **Year 2:** Zambia, South Africa and Lesotho
- **Year 3:** Tanzania, Malawi and eSwatini
- **Year 4:** Mozambique and Angola

All countries and participants will be linked via an e-learning platform, regular communications, and regional policy dialogue.

**Congratulations on being selected to this programme!**
A focus on Sustainable Development
Regional sustainable development concerns include poverty, health, food insecurity, climate change and disaster risk reduction, biodiversity loss, water security, gender equity, housing and cities, rural development and improved governance, amongst others.

Sustainable development opportunities include harnessing tangible and intangible cultural heritage and regional social relations for contributing to well-being, peace and democracy. Other sustainable development opportunities include saving and managing water resources better; creating more cohesive, equitable communities; developing circular economies and sustainable energy supplies; and more.

All of these concerns and opportunities affect the well-being of southern African people, and are critical concerns for the youth of the region.

The Sustainability Starts with Teachers programme directly addresses the following target of Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all”. It addresses Target 4.7 of SDG 4 directly, which requires all governments to,

*By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.*
What is Education for Sustainable Development?
Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society. ESD gives attention to:

- **Learning content**: Integrating critical issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable consumption and production into the curriculum.

- **Pedagogy and learning environments**: Designing teaching and learning in an interactive, learner-centred way that enables exploratory, action oriented and transformative learning and contributes to learning environments that are inclusive and inspire learners to act for sustainability.

- **Societal transformation**: Empowering learners of any age, in any education setting, to transform themselves and the society they live in to enable transitions to greener economies and societies, develop skills for green jobs, adopt sustainable lifestyles and become global citizens who can create a more just, peaceful, tolerant, secure and sustainable world.

- **Learning outcomes**: Stimulating learning and promoting core competencies, such as critical and systemic thinking, collaborative decision-making, and taking responsibility for present and future generations.

In **Learning Action 2, 3 and 4** we will explore the meaning of ESD in more depth, and we will look at approaches to develop ESD in practice.
Who is the SST Course for?
The Sustainability Starts with Teachers (SST) course is for **teacher educators and TVET educators**, not teachers or TVET instructors. Teacher and TVET educators need to use the professional learning on this course to improve the education of teachers and TVET instructors. In turn, this will support teachers and TVET instructors to integrate ESD into their teaching practice. The programme seeks to support educational engagement with 'The Africa we Want' by re-thinking what quality education and training is.

**Figure 1** The SST Course is for teacher educators and VET educators, who improve their practice and, through this, influence student teachers, VET instructors and classroom practice.

The programme encourages teacher educators and TVET educators to put transformative education and learning towards sustainable development at the centre of their educational work.

In **Learning Action 1, 2 and 3** we will explore the meaning of transformative education and learning towards sustainable development in a southern African context in more depth.
An Action Learning Programme
with a Change Project
at the centre

This is an **Action Learning Programme**. The course is made up of five different action learning units, which together will help you to develop a situated **ESD Change Project** in your teacher education or TVET education institution.

The Change Project will develop over the five learning actions, and will be an ongoing ‘work in progress’ as the programme unfolds. A set of guidelines are available for the Change Project which you can use as you progress. These are designed to help you reflect on your change project over time.
What is an ESD Change Project?

An ESD Change Project is any process or project that brings about change in a teacher education or TVET education institution policy, strategy, curriculum, learning programme or learning environments, or in education-community relationships, with implications for sustainable development ‘on the ground’. The ESD Change Project must be co-defined and should be collaboratively developed and implemented in a small community of practice (i.e. with your colleagues) in your TEI/TVET education institution.

The purpose of using an action learning approach and an ESD change project model is to support actual changes in programmes and practices towards sustainable development.

The focus of the change projects in this course will be on African cultural, social and ecological contexts and concerns, and how these can be related to improving educational quality and relevance as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4, Target 4.7 outlined above.

The ‘Sustainability Starts with Teachers’ course framework was developed in consultation with teacher educators, education department officials, ministries of education and other ministries, including the TVET sector. The programme is based on an environmental scan of the current status of ESD in teacher education and TVET in SADC countries, which shows that there is need for further support of teacher educators and TVET educators to lead the integration of ESD into teacher education and TVET instruction programmes.

Much more needs to be done to upscale ESD in the SADC teacher education and TVET sector. The programme aligns with UNESCO’s work in leading the development of professional standards for teachers that are aligned with 21st century challenges and inclusive sustainable development goals of each country, and the SADC region more broadly. It also aligns with the SADC Ministers approved regional framework for professional competence for teachers.

The programme is also based on best practice in the SADC region, and builds on the Change Project model that has been widely tested and used over many years in the SADC Regional Environmental Education Programme, in the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability Programme in African Universities, in a SADC/SWEDES Teacher Education Programme partnership, in a number of Sida-funded international training programmes, and most recently in the Japanese Funds in Trust-supported UNESCO/SARUA Sustainability Starts with Teachers Project with Secondary teacher educators in nine SADC countries in 2017. The model is therefore a ‘home grown’ model developed in Africa by African ESD practitioners over approximately 20 years.

This best practice model shows that if teacher educators work together to bring about curriculum innovation and practice changes in their institutions, they are able to provide strong leadership for ESD in teacher education and other educational institutions (including TVET institutions). Through this, they can inspire the next generation of teachers to offer better quality, more relevant education and training in the SADC Region.
Structure of the Programme

The action learning programme follows a cycle of five learning actions that involves:

1. Reviewing context, curriculum, teacher education and TVET policy in the light of recent trends towards emphasis on 21st century demands, including demands for a new type of competence, and new knowledge(s), as well as use of ICTs in education;

2. Identifying relevant content related to sustainability issues and opportunities, and the SDGs in SADC countries, and how this is situated in cultures and life worlds of learners in education and training institutions;

3. Using transformative learning methods and creating transformative learning environments;

4. Planning and undertaking assessments for ESD learning; and

5. Monitoring, evaluating and scaling for impact.

Together, these learning actions ‘build up’ the Change Project over time.

THE 5-STEP ACTION LEARNING PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

... for ESD curriculum innovation and whole institution change in ECD, Primary, Secondary and TVET teacher education institutions

1. Reviewing context, policy and the 21st century teaching competences

2. Identifying relevant content on SDGs and critical issues

3. Using transformative learning methods and creating transformative learning environments

4. Planning and undertaking alternative assessments

5. Monitoring, evaluating and scaling our impact

YOUR ESD CHANGE PROJECT AT THE CENTRE

Figure 2 The action learning cycle involving five learning actions.
The Learning Actions

The learning actions will be undertaken in each of the participating institutions, with a ‘lead’ teacher educator supporting others to work through the learning actions together. They will also be supported to build up networks and communities of practice involving past and current course participants. The focus should be on collaborating with others to bring about ESD changes in the institution via curriculum innovations, teaching practice innovations, and whole institution innovations. Progress related to the learning actions should be carefully captured for monitoring purposes, and for final reporting on the ESD Change Project at the end of the programme.

The learning actions can be repeated in ongoing action learning cycles in the participating institutions after the programme. The Change Project does not need to ‘stop’ once the ‘Sustainability Starts with Teachers’ programme comes to an end. Ideally, it should just be the first step towards ongoing change towards sustainability in the institutions and amongst its partners and communities. The Change Project Guidelines include some past examples. See also the www.teachers_ESD.org website, where other examples will be shared.

• Learning Action 1

Review context, policy and progress related to 21st century teaching competences

Learning Action 1 involves developing a common understanding of Sustainable Development and Education for Sustainable Development. It involves undertaking a local education and sustainable development policy and context review and a review of how the institution is addressing 21st century teacher educator competences. The aim is to deepen our understanding of what ESD is, and how it is already being integrated into Teacher Education and TVET education (or not), in order to identify what can be changed and improved.

Learning Action 1

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What is already happening in your educational institution with regards to ESD?

2. Why do we need to expand our focus on ESD in Teacher Education and TVET education?

3. What learning and competences can we work towards for ESD in Teacher Education and TVET education?
• Learning Action 2

Identify relevant content related to SD in local context, the SDGs and other critical issues for teacher education and TVET ESD programmes

Learning Action 2 involves giving attention to the cultural foundation and context of education and, from here, assessing the relevance of knowledge of sustainable development concerns and how to find further knowledge that may be needed or desired in the context. Valuable cultural knowledge is often ignored or neglected. At the same time, knowledge is dynamic – it is changing quickly and it is often difficult to keep up-to-date and to contextualise knowledge.

The aim of this Learning Action is to locate, situate, find, select, process and work with ever changing ESD knowledge. The focus will be on integrating this into existing or new Teacher Education programmes. A strong emphasis will also be placed on cultural heritage and the cultural foundation of knowledge, and how situated cultural knowledge and practices relate with knowledge more traditionally included in the education and learning systems.

Learning Action 2

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What ESD knowledge exists in the local context? How has this been shared over time?
2. What are matters of concern for communities? What knowledge are they willing to share?
3. What ESD content and issues are already being focused on in your institution? How is this being done?
4. Which new knowledge of SDGs needs to be ‘in focus’? And how does this relate to ESD Learning Objectives?
5. Which critical issues and concepts need to be covered, and where will you source further information on these?
6. Are there any useful/important knowledge resources that you can identify and use in your Teacher Education / TVET education programmes?
• **Learning Action 3**

**Develop and pilot transformative learning processes and learning environments**

Learning Action 3 involves planning and implementing transformative learning processes and learning environments. It starts by considering the relationship that exists between intangible cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge, science and technology (including ICTs for learning), and transformative learning.

This Learning Action also considers the importance of involving people in sustainable development actions through ESD. It explores different pedagogies and methods that can be used for ESD. It also focuses in on the importance of transformative learning environments for ESD and how these can be created, including through whole institution or ‘green campus’ initiatives.

Learning Action 3 encourages reflection on existing pedagogical practice and learning environments, with a view to supporting and encouraging transformative practice. The aim is to work towards transformative learning and transformed learning environments.

---

**Learning Action 3 KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. What kinds of transformative learning are you already engaged with?
2. Which new methods and approaches can you use in your teacher education practice?
3. How should others be involved in the transformative learning process (e.g. youth, communities, etc.)?
4. How can transformative learning be supported and extended by focusing on transformative learning environments?

---

• **Learning Action 4**

**Design and try out assessment methods for significant learning and ESD**

Learning Action 4 places a heavy emphasis on assessment for significant learning and ESD. Here the focus is on how, if we change assessment practice, we can also transform teaching and learning.

The Learning Action area focuses in on assessing significant learning, which includes assessment of values and ethics and assessing ‘learning to learn’. It considers various approaches to assessment that can be used for ESD, including the use of formative and informal approaches to assessment that enable significant learning for ESD. It also addresses the difficulty of setting higher order assessment questions and questions that address values and ethics, and ‘learning to learn’ as important dimensions of assessment. The aim is to strengthen ESD relevant assessment approaches, especially the assessment of significant learning in ESD processes.

---

**Learning Action 4 KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. What approaches to assessment are already being used in the teacher education institutions and TVET education? To what extent do they help to assess ESD Learning Objectives (or not)?
2. How can assessment practice be changed to include a wider range of assessment practices that strengthen ESD teaching and learning outcomes, especially the assessment of significant learning?
3. How can we assess values and ethics in education and for ESD?
Learning Action 5
Monitor and evaluate programmes, and scale for impact

Learning Action 5 involves monitoring the implementation of ESD in your teacher education / TVET education institution, with emphasis on progress being made with the Change Projects. It provides tools for establishing what is valued/valuable about the change projects, and also helps to think through what can be scaled for impact. The purpose is to reflectively review ESD practices as they are unfolding in the TEIs and TVET institutions. Use of ICTs for sharing practice, linking up with other networks and platforms, is also included as a focus for scaling and sharing experiences to extend ESD innovations beyond the local institutional setting.

Learning Action 5
KEY QUESTIONS:

1. How can we develop high quality M&E processes?

2. What value is being created via the ESD Change Project in the TEI?

3. How can we scale and expand our ESD change projects via policy, networking, and community engaged approaches to teacher education?

4. What role for ICTs in sharing practice and linking up with other networking platforms and processes, and how can this expand our impact?

Consult the ‘Change Project Guidelines’ for ‘next steps’ …
UNESCO Education Sector
Education is UNESCO’s top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations’ specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.

The Global Education 2030 Agenda
UNESCO, as the United Nations’ specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.
The Sustainability Starts with Teachers is a collaborative capacity building programme for teacher educators on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Southern Africa. The project builds on the existing capacity base for ESD in the Southern African region and links existing and expanding ESD capacity to the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA)'s ESD programme of work, which is aligned with the Southern African Development Community Education Sector goals.

Focusing on the region's educators to implement changes towards sustainable development, the programme will have the catalytic effect of enabling the next generation of teachers to integrate sustainable development into their teaching and community practice, contributing to the achievement of educational quality and relevance in Southern Africa.

The programme is a partnership programme.