

The future of education related to SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions): A position paper

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Abstract

Abstract: The spreading aspects of the seventeen sustainable development goals have been of concern to researchers in education worldwide. These goals have shed the light and grasped the attention to very crucial issues. The significance of these issues (the cores of each SDG) not only lie in their importance but also in their connectedness and mutual influence among each other. Education, being the highest peak of achievement in every society, and hence in the whole (small) world, is directly affected by each SDG. That was the reason for considering the future of Education in sight of one of the most effective sustainable goals, namely, peace, justice and strong institutions. The current paper is a position paper that discusses the float of the sixteenth sustainable goal along the future of Education. The researchers propose two statements: firstly, SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 possess a reciprocal interaction property (i.e. they have mutual impact on each other). Secondly, this cyclic process has to start by first accomplishing SDG 16.

Keywords: future education, SDG 4, SDG 16

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INTRODUCTION

In September 2015, 193 countries have agreed on a set of global goals adopted by all UN members. They are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were brought to light as part of Agenda 2030 on Jan. 1st 2016. All countries are sought to take actions into their own national development in order to end penury, to protect the globe and reach prosperity. SDG 16, which is: Peace, Justice and Strong institutions, urges countries to approach safe, collaborative, caring, encompassing societies and to reach egalitarianism through institutions of well-structured systems (UN, 2016). As Agenda 2030 acknowledges that sustainable development would definitely assure and require such societies, then SDG 16 is considered both, an aim and a bridge to cross upon to reach them (UN, 2016).

On the other hand, many parties have begun working on the SDGs' goals for their interconnection and universality. However, noting that these goals will not be met if things are done the same way they have been, stakeholders such as Member States, UN agencies and academia have managed new strategies and approaches (Lawrence, Ihebuzor & Lawrence, 2020). One of which is combining different goals together in order to boost the achievement of one of the combined goals or more, such as Quality Education (SDG 4) and (SDG 16) on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. In view of this and along the inevitable concern about the future of education related to SDG 16, the researchers propose two

statements: firstly, SDG 4 and SDG 16 possess a reciprocal interaction property (i.e. they have mutual impact on each other). Secondly, this cyclic process has to start by first accomplishing SDG 16.

SDG 4 AND SDG 16 POSSESS A RECIPROCAL INTERACTION PROPERTY

UNESCO's 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report spot the light on the intersection of education and SDG 16 through their reciprocity nature. Education is not possible without safe, peaceful and just societies, and on the other hand, education is an essence for providing these values.

Every country finds difficulties in dealing with corruption, crime and human rights abuses for every citizen. Thus, making establishment of peace in societies out of reach (IAEG-SDGs, 2020). While international investments is greatly affected by local conflicts and hence destroying the macro-economic development, as a result, poverty increases, life expectancy reduces and low education results (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013). Such a brutal impact prolongs for a longer range on the local economy and the industries' sectors decelerating future development as well (Ebrahimian, 2003).

The pandemic lockdowns of COVID 19 caused severe financial problems for many people creating personal stress and instability resulting an increase in crimes and law breaking on one hand, and reduction in security, life-saving services and justice. In addition to child abuse and misuse globally. The SDG framework is an initial step toward achieving a global citizenship education (GCE) through implementing global spirit and intercultural mindset into schools and educational institutions worldwide (Pashby & Andreotti, 2015; Sund, 2016). This is done by engaging learners with national and international issues, which in turn penetrate countries borders and influence everyone (Lee, 2020). In addition, in order to achieve mutual reinforcement of SDG 4 and SDG 16, a multi-stakeholder strategy, including partnership with higher education institutions and scholars, is critical.

IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON SDG 16

Education plays an important role in promoting peace, justice and strong institutions. By integrating the global ideals of peace, nonviolence, tolerance, and respect for human rights into all education curriculum and methodologies will help establishing a strategy to promote peace via education. There are UNESCO's Associated Schools Project, ASP, in schools (at all stages: primary – secondary). Projects produced by the ASP supplement schools with learning materials that stimulate SDG 16. These materials spotlight on global crucial themes such as world concerns, human rights, democracy, intercultural literature and international conflicts in a methodology that furnishes peace education (PE). PE generates awareness of the origins and causes of conflicts as well as equip learners with the necessary skills and ideas of how to respond to these conflicts smartly and justly, since conflicts are unavoidable while violence is. Currently, only few hundred schools worldwide are joining the ASP programs (Amamio, 2004: 10, 17).

Higher education, as well, contributes evidently to SDG 16 through its well-planned instructional programs and its precise scope of research. Such programs may contain modules on justice and governance (similar to those developed by Education for Justice - E4J). These curricula accentuate values relevant to peace-seeking and ending of conflicts in addition to promoting critical thinking and globalized issues. By implementing these targets, HEI's

play the role of the changing agent in their countries since leaders, governors, politicians, stakeholders and decision makers would have mindsets created at HEI's (Milton, 2021: 18-19). Thus, HE's education should be free from prejudice and harassment and should be antiviolenence to inspire respect for human rights and prevent violence (Klima, Senra & De Backer: 166-167). Needless to say, that the 21st century education of digital programs in e-learning also facilitate SDG 16 using systematic approaches that are based on values such as justice, equality, tolerance and responsibility integrated in courses' tasks assigned to pairs or groups of multinationality students. These programs bring different ideas and opinions closer and merge them toward common goals (Zhang et al, 2020: 12). The previously mentioned implementation and applying of those procedural ideas are formulated in terms of the learning objectives setting for promoting SDG 16, namely: Cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral learning objectives as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Impact of SDG 16 on education

Summary of the learning objectives	
Cognitive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehension of justice, inclusion and peace, their connection to law. 2. Comprehension of the local legislation, its representation and the possibility of misuse by corruption. 3. The ability to compare between local systems of Justice with those in other countries. 4. Realizing the significance of individuals and groups in retaining justice, inclusion, peace and promoting strong institutions locally and globally. 5. Realizing the importance of human rights internationally.
Socio-emotional	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to associate with others who can help facilitating peace, justice, inclusion and strong institutions (PJI-SI) in the country. 2. The ability to debate local and global issues of (PJI-SI). 3. The ability to commiserate with those suffering from injustice locally and internationally. 4. The ability to reflect on someone's own role in issues related to SDG 16. 5. The ability to reflect on someone's own attitudes and affiliation with certain groups.
Behavioral	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to make a critical assessment of issues of (PJI-SI) locally, regionally and globally. 2. The ability to behest and support the progression of policies that call for (PJI-SI). 3. The ability to collaborate with those who are deprived from justice and suffer from conflicts. 4. The ability to participate actively in local parties speaking up and standing against injustice. 5. The ability to contribute to conflict resolution nationally.

Note: Adapted from *Education for sustainable development goals: Learning objectives*, by M. Rieckmann, 2017, p. 42. Copyright 2017 by UNESCO Publishing.

There is a cyclical relationship between inequality and conflict in every sector of life. One of which to consider is the growing inequality in education among ethnic, religious, or other identity groups. Such an inequality definitely contributes to the impetus and stimulate rebellion. In this context, unequal education is one of the direct sources of complaint and feeling oppressed. Gradually accumulated states of being would burst into uncontrolled expressions of rage resembled in violent confrontation, destruction and

inhuman acts (FHI 360, 2015; Justino, 2016; Østby & Urdal, 2010). Accordingly, countries with greater inequality between groups have a higher risk of conflict than other conflict predicting factors, such as wealth, political regimes and geography (FHI360 & UNICEF, 2016).

Growing global interest applied many methods to improve the performance of educational institutions such as the (Institutional Government) or ‘Strong Institutions (SI)’ as a contemporary global trend whose goal is improving educational effectiveness, development of outcomes, reduction of the abuse of power and comply with laws and standards of ethical behaviours (Muhammad, 2015). These SI’s help with achieving transparency and legal responsibilities, and reducing financial and administrative corruption (Awad, 2011; Ibrahim, 2012). Moreover, SI’s increase the production ability, dissemination and beneficiary from information of all kinds (Fazekas & Burns, 2012).

Governments must ensure adequacy of education systems to sustainability challenges by imposing effective polices. These polices include integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into curricula and country standards for learning outcomes. ESD should not be supplementary to the existing curriculum, but should be dominant in all components of education (learning content, campus operations, organizational culture, student participation, leadership and management, research, etc.) (Hajdukiewicz & Pera, 2020).

THE CYCLIC PROCESS HAS TO START BY FIRST ACCOMPLISHING SDG 16

According to the previous two sections, there is a reciprocal interaction between SDG 16 and Education, which functions, in a cyclic process, as shown in Figure 1. It is reasonable that this cycle has to start by first accomplishing SDG 16. This is so since SDG 16 calls on UN member states to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies ... provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” The presence (or absence) of inclusive institutions have an influence on the rest of SDG’s (who in turn also have an impact on each other). This implies the necessity of achieving SDG 16 first.

Moreover, SDG 16 urges for political institutions that are collaborative in pursuing the reduction of inequality in all its forms, political, social, financial, etc. (The global observatory, 2019). In addition, SDG 16 itself has to start with individual’s own inner satisfaction that considers remedial justice. The concepts and beliefs of SDG 16 could be improved by enriching autonomy, self-sufficiency and decentralization among individuals. This is achieved by promoting recognition of the legal reconstruction elements which put forward the cultural aspects of human rights, remodeling a ‘human rights’-based culture that is directed toward a better future rather than plain traditional one (Johnson, 2004: 468).

CHALLENGES IN THE WAY OF THE SDG 4 – SDG 16 PROCESS

Recent years have witnessed an increase in the number of violent conflicts worldwide including high-intensity armed conflicts. There is still an uneven progression in promoting SDG 16 across many regions. SDG 16 is still the most challenging sustainable goal to accomplish. This has been interpreted and attributed to ‘Individualism’ (Mintzberg, 2015: 26). Individualism is resembled by a single person approach as well as a single group, party, county and even a single country. According to people of public influence such as philosophers,

authors, historians and politicians there is no easy solution for violence and conflicts that are Individualism-based (Mukhi & Quental, 2019: 11). However, governors and leaders have to work more sincerely toward SDG 16 in their own countries first and internationally afterwards, maintain justice for all with no biases in each and every sector of the society, fighting corruption firmly and ensuring safety, security and peace. Investing in an educational system that can backup these steps would fruitfully support these steps.

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the relationship between SDG 4 and SDG 16 in an attempt to foresee the future of education related to SDG 16. As mentioned, SDG16 is considered the most difficult to achieve. Even though, there is evidently a cyclic reciprocal interaction property that should be initiated by accomplishing SDG 16, especially justice and peace. As mentioned at the end of the previous section, these actions include highlighting diversity as a fundamental human value to be appreciated and accepted naturally. Encouraging and financially support collaborative projects that consist of a variety of different cultural background, both locally and internationally (Mukhi & Quental, 2019: 11). To put high investments in educational systems that adopt the previously mentioned values, cooperate with various types of alternative education that emphasizes global ethics, indigenous learning, ecopedagogy, ecocentric education (Kopnina, 2020: 1), dropping the slogan “All for One and One for All” and raising “Everyone for All and All for Everyone”.

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