

Case Study Guide for Educators 2024

Practicing Education for Sustainable Development



Global Schools
Program



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
SOLUTIONS NETWORK
A GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

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About Global Schools

The Global Schools Program (GSP) is an initiative of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network in support of UNESCO's Roadmap for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The GSP envisions a world where every student is equipped with the environmental and social knowledge, values, and skills to shape a prosperous and sustainable future. Its mission is to support schools, educators, and researchers with training, curriculum, and methodologies to integrate sustainable development into education from the classroom to policy level.

The GSP offers primary and secondary schools complimentary resources, instructional frameworks, and training for implementing ESD in classrooms worldwide. The team has developed a wide array of educational materials, including guides on sustainable development, comprehensive lesson plans available in fourteen languages, teacher handbooks, and guidance on curriculum development.

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Background

What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide aims to highlight methods used by educators globally in integrating Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their teaching and activities. It presents a variety of case studies from different international settings, illustrating innovative ways to engage schools, incorporate SDG initiatives into curricula, and nurture a culture of sustainable development in educational institutions.

The guide distills key learnings for future participants in the Global Schools Program (GSP) network and offers valuable insights for teachers and educators worldwide aspiring to infuse ESD into their school communities. Additionally, it celebrates the remarkable contributions of Global Schools Advocates, acknowledging their successes as educators and agents of change, and also addresses the challenges they encounter in their work.

Who is this guide for?

This guide serves as a valuable resource for a diverse audience, including educators, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers. It is designed to offer stakeholders in primary and secondary education a detailed overview of ESD lessons, activities, and effective strategies for school-wide implementation, drawing from successful examples across various global settings.

Moreover, the guide navigates the intricate challenges and varying experiences educators encounter, especially those with differing levels of familiarity with ESD. It provides practical insights into the incorporation of ESD within school curriculum, tackling potential hurdles, and offering advice for frequently encountered problems. As such, the guide is a hands-on instrument for educators and school leaders dedicated to nurturing sustainable development in their learning communities.

By including real-world case studies and experiences, the guide aids in understanding the nuanced process of adapting and applying ESD principles in diverse educational environments, thus serving as a comprehensive reference for those committed to embedding sustainable practices in education.



What is Education for Sustainable Development?

According to UNESCO, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) “empowers learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to address the interconnected global challenges we are facing, including climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, poverty and inequality” (“Education for Sustainable Development”, UNESCO, 2021).¹ ESD is directly addressed in SDG Target 4.7 and seeks to ensure that students receive transformative education that enables them to understand and act on the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole. ESD competencies allow students to reflect on their own opinions, learn from others and practice empathy, deal with conflicts, develop innovative actions that further sustainability, reflect on their own actions and values, evaluate multiple perspectives and choices, and understand complex relationships and systems (Leicht, A. Heiss, J. & Byun, W.J, 2018).²

The Global Schools Advocates Program

The Global Schools Advocates Program provides training on ESD to teachers within primary and secondary schools throughout the world. It works with focal-point teachers and educators within schools that act as action planners and connectors within communities, ensuring the implementation of a school-wide, long-term strategy to bring the SDGs, global citizenship, and 21st-century skills within school curricula and operations.

This guide tells the story of teachers and educators participating in the September 2021 – February 2022 Advocate cohort. 327 educators participated in the Global Schools Advocates training course, representing 75 countries. These teachers reached 75,117 students, and engaged 15,935 teachers and/or school admins in their lessons, projects, and whole-of-school campaigns and activities on ESD. 51,200 of these students directly benefited from a classroom lesson on sustainable development taught by a Global Schools Advocate. In addition, 33,971 community members and parents participated in Global Schools’ activities.

The majority of lesson plans spanned SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 13: Climate Action, SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 1: No Poverty, and SDG 2: Zero Hunger.



¹ UNESCO. “Education for Sustainable Development.” UNESCO, January 3, 2022. <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development>.

² Leicht, A. Heiss, J. & Byun, W.J (2018). “Issues and Trends in Education for Sustainable Development.” UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261802>

Case Studies



Case Studies

Introduction to Case Studies

This next section presents a collection of case studies featuring Global Schools Advocates who have graduated from the Global Schools Advocates Program. Some educators entered the program with previous involvement in projects aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Others encountered the concepts of ESD and SDGs for the first time through the program. This variety in experiences enriches the case studies, offering a broader view of how sustainable development can be integrated into educational settings.

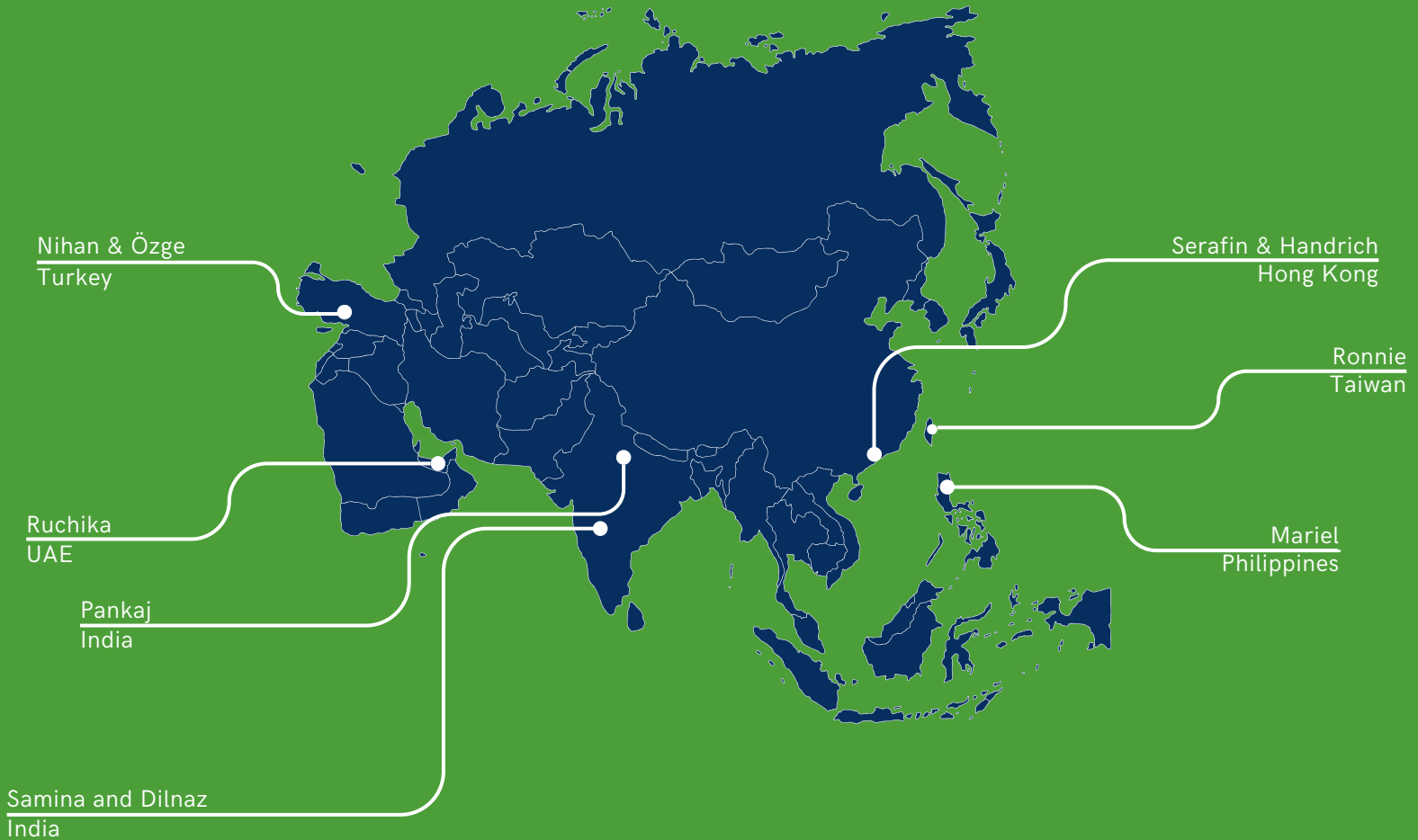
The 'lessons learned' section that follows will distill the key elements of success and the challenges faced by teachers, school leaders, and educators. This synthesis aims to provide valuable insights and guidance for others embarking on similar journeys towards sustainable education.

Methodology

The team started with an analysis of the Global Schools Program Graduation Feedback Survey (2022) and the Final Key Performance Indicator Survey (2022). Then the team conducted interviews with Advocates to build a robust case study guide and garner an in-depth understanding of qualitative and quantitative feedback from the survey forms.

The case study interviews were structured using a standardized questionnaire containing 10 topics, which covered challenges, approach, impact projects, and other details about the Advocates' journey. The methodology for the questionnaire was jointly developed by the Global Schools Content Team and the Global Schools Research Team. Interviews were carried out by the Global Schools Program Team and lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. Additionally, the Global Schools³ Team carried out focus groups with Advocates to compile further feedback on the Advocates Program.

ASIA





Nihan and Özge

"Teachers should reflect on their current practices to identify existing connections to the SDGs, emphasizing the importance of not adding more projects but enhancing existing lessons to promote ESD and the SDGs more explicitly." - Özge Aydemir Kaya

Collaboration and Curriculum Mapping Across the School

Özge Aydemir Kaya and Nihan Şehsuvaroğlu work together as science teachers at the Hisar School in Turkey. They had already been working on integrating sustainable development into their classrooms, but becoming Global Schools Advocates and attending formal training allowed them to have a more structured plan to integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their daily practices and become more aware of ESD principles.

While Hisar School did not have a climate education mandate, most teachers were already working with the SDGs, even though activities did not explicitly make this connection. Introducing the Global Schools framework and ESD allowed students and teachers to dive deeper into their understanding of sustainable development.



After having their school sign the Global Schools Pledge, Özge and Nihan initiated their first whole-school project. Their intention was not only to get their school administration to buy into the vision of ESD at the Hisar School, but to also get them on board supporting teachers with the curricular move toward sustainable development. Özge and Nihan took a very strategic approach by listing out projects teachers were already doing that addressed ESD and what projects they would like to add through their role as Global Schools Advocates.

Once this initial hurdle was crossed, Nihan and Özge started running training sessions for a total of 265 teachers to help them understand and integrate ESD into their classrooms. These training sessions created a common language of SDGs in the curriculum, ensuring that every teacher in the school had the same understanding when it came to what ESD was and what it meant to incorporate ESD in the curriculum. This was essential before moving ahead with more projects.

After conducting the training sessions, Nihan and Özge relied mostly on google workspace applications to measure classroom integration. They also added the UNESCO ESD standard to ATLAS Rubicon, which is used by their school to map curriculum and create unit plans. By adding the ESD standards to their curriculum mapping tool, it was easier to plan an interdisciplinary unit and gather data on vertical alignment with the newly incorporated ESD standards. They also had support from their leadership, academic department, and institutional development department to showcase their work with the SDGs, create posters, and garner students' involvement.

Özge and Nihan initially relied on the Global Schools training as a resource along with some of the provided activity ideas. They then adapted the Global Schools activities to fit their curriculum and later adapted these resources to be more specific to their own school environment, based on the information and training received. For example, they adapted the [Community Issues](#) worksheet for school leadership and created their own google forms to collect all their colleagues' ideas and thoughts. They also created grade-level specific folders with Global Schools' resources for their colleagues. This helped other teachers become inspired to develop new activities and build upon the resources provided by the Global Schools team.



Due to all these actions, the SDGs became interwoven into the school's curriculum. For example:

- Students worked on a year-long project surrounding SDGs in science classes, such as creating their own sustainable soaps;
- The primary school completed a showcase on SDG 13: Climate Action;
- The Turkish language department started a project to help students in rural parts of Eastern Turkey by bringing more innovation and resources to their schools;
- The school's SDG awareness project, which has been running for four years, has evolved into a club. This club allows members to address local community issues aligned with the SDGs, such as clean water and sanitation, with initiatives like rainwater harvesting. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus shifted to waste reduction. Additionally, the club collaborated with a school in Milan on art projects, and established a partnership with a school in Athens for cultural exchange programs, expanding its engagement with the SDGs.



Nihan and Özge encountered challenges due to their school being quite large, which occasionally necessitated online meetings. Integrating ESD learning objectives within the national curriculum was also difficult. They emphasized the importance of viewing ESD projects as a means to enhance existing teaching practices and student outcomes, rather than additional work. Teachers, though enthusiastic, had to balance ESD projects with other commitments, requiring skilled time management and coordination.



As a result of the Global Schools Program methodology, teachers at Hisar School have created a much more interdisciplinary approach to learning, and students have started working with external NGOs. For example, in collaboration with their innovation center, Nihan and Özge have developed partnerships with external organizations to draw upon new SDG-related materials.



Özge's most memorable moment as an Advocate was seeing her students return after the summer,, well-versed in sustainable development and the SDGs' relevance to their lives, affirming the positive impact of her work. She now feels like a more effective teacher. Nihan highlighted that being an Advocate fostered a common language among teachers at her school, and their work has inspired other teachers to become Advocates as well.

Nihan advises that new Advocates begin by introducing the SDGs or ESD to school administration for their support and integration. She also recommends starting with small projects to foster a SDG and ESD mindset. Özge suggests that teachers should reflect on their current practices to identify existing connections to the SDGs, emphasizing the importance of not adding more projects but enhancing existing lessons to promote ESD and the SDGs more explicitly.





Serafin & Handrich

"It is my hope to inspire and empower K-12 schools around the globe to play a more active role in contributing to sustainable development. Teachers will play a key role in guiding and motivating the next generation to find a long-term solution to promoting sustainability." - Serafin Cristobal

Creating an Innovative Service-Learning and SDG program

In 2019, Serafin Cristobal (Rafi) initiated Project Hope at The Harbour School Hong Kong (THS) with the ambition to kindle a passion for community service amongst students. Starting as a modest school club, it rapidly gained momentum with extensive backing from the entire school, eventually evolving into a school-wide movement.

By 2021, Rafi, alongside Handrich Hernando, became a Global Schools Advocate, propelling him to champion the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

With the support of school management, Rafi led THS to sign the Global Schools Program Pledge in 2021. Building on the foundations of Project Hope, Rafi introduced the Social Impact and Sustainability Program (SISP) in August 2021.

Within two years, Project Hope transitioned from a simple initiative into the expansive SISP, an institutionalized project that educates young students about SDGs, with Rafi serving as its Director.

The SISP was carefully planned in advance of its first year of its launch so that it could be used as a reference for other schools to adopt. First, the school engaged in a pre-planning phase, where they designed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework to measure young students' learning and behavioral changes before and after their participation in SISP. Training sessions were also carried out for SISP staff on Target 4.7, specifically on ESD and Global Citizenship Education (GCE). Second, the school engaged in a program launch phase. In this phase, they exposed students to SDGs following the framework below:

- Term 1 – Awareness
- Term 2 – Exposure (Reflection, Planning)
- Term 3 – Take Responsibility (Initiate Project, Participation)

The final phase was reporting to stakeholders.



Throughout these phases, the program had a set of planned activities, with different themes for each grade level. Rafi explains,

“Younger students might learn about wildlife, where others in older grades might work on topics revolving around climate change. Each grade level has a progression.”

These thematic areas are not only integrated into grade-level classroom activities, but also school-wide events, such as “Meatless Monday” campaigns or donation drives.

SISP has been receiving support and feedback from the school community, including teachers, since its launch. Students share their knowledge with parents, who now want to get involved. The Parent Teachers Association has suggested activities and partnerships for community engagement, with some members volunteering for community events. With two full-time staff working on SISP, the program is expanding its scope beyond teaching and learning in the classroom into interdisciplinary projects, ensuring the implementation of sustainability in both curricula and school operations, as well as partnerships.

In November 2022, THS launched its first report, [The Harbour School Education for Sustainable Development Report](#), which showcases outcomes of the SISP. Through data collection, impact measurement, and sustainability reporting, the report demonstrates how seemingly small initiatives, when done together and consistently, have the potential to inspire young students and the larger community, both inside and outside of the school. In the upcoming years, Rafi and Handrich will align SISP even more closely with the school's curriculum.

Both Project Hope and SISP have been recognised in the UN SDG Achievement Awards, organized by the Green Council Hong Kong for 2021 and 2022, respectively, amongst other established organizations. In particular, SISP was honored to receive three major awards in 2022 as follows: Project Award – Silver; Project Award – Best Approach; Project Award – High Replicability.

In conclusion, Rafi aspires to motivate K-12 schools worldwide to actively contribute to sustainable development, emphasizing the crucial role that teachers hold in ushering the next generation toward achieving SDGs. He actively shares his journey as a Global School Advocate with schools in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia.

Rafi spoke at the Asia-Pacific International Schools Conference 2022 on Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) topics and was honored with the “Outstanding Social Caring Young Leadership Award 2022/23” for his commendable efforts in promoting community service and sustainable education at THS.





Ruchika

"What we observe in our students won't be the same in other contexts. It's important to look into what your students identify as a problem and think about what they can implement successfully in their community."

Infusing SDGs into the IB Curriculum

Ruchika Sachdev is the Primary Years Program (PYP) Coordinator at Dubai International Academy in the UAE, an International Baccalaureate (IB) School. She first became an Advocate 2021, and subsequently, fellow colleague and homeroom teacher, Barbara Lynham, also became an Advocate. Before joining Global Schools, Dubai International Academy had already infused many elements of sustainable development into its learning practices.

Through a series of workshops, students delve into understanding and unraveling the SDGs, all while exploring their personal passions, whether it's sports, animals, science, or more.

Guided by teachers and high school mentors, Year 6 students discover the connections between their interests and specific SDGs, leading to personal inquiries that involve research, interviews, action plans, and site visits.

After two months of dedicated work, students present their findings and action plans in an impactful exhibition.



Peace messages from students on World Peace Day

For example, every year, the PYP carries out the Year 6 exhibition as part of the IB program, which includes the students researching and incorporating the Global Goals into their inquiry and presentations. The Year 6 Exhibition, which marks the culmination of the PYP, places a strong emphasis on the SDGs.



SDGs as murals on the playground

One of the school's strengths is their approach on integrating sustainable development into specific teaching units. Even though the IB's curriculum makes it very clear how teachers can link topics to the outside world, the Dubai International Academy has gone above and beyond.

Ruchika has encouraged everyone to sit within their teams to map long-term planning and how they can integrate the SDGs into their teaching, looking for natural links that are relevant for the students. The school follows a collaborative approach to reviewing the units in order to balance the teaching of the SDGs across the year groups. There are approximately seven teachers per year-group, and it all begins at the start of an academic year, when teachers get together to see how units can be linked to the SDGs. The process unfolds in the following way:

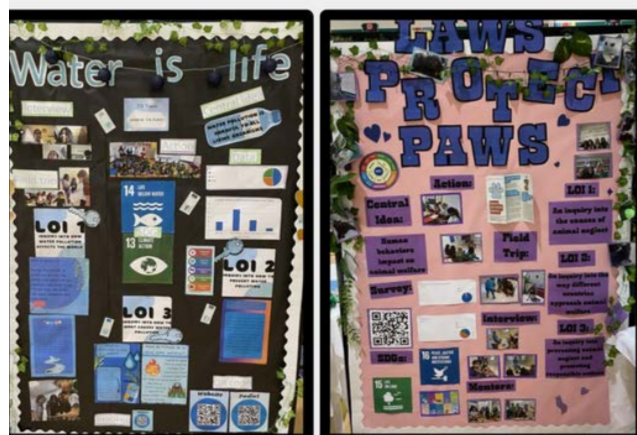
Linking units to SDGs

1. Each overall unit is linked with a specific SDG. For example, a unit on "states of matter" was linked to SDG 6: Clean Water, more specifically on the targets relating to the water cycle and water conservation.
2. When the SDG link doesn't fit in with the unit of inquiry, the school seeks to find a way to introduce the goal via an independent activity or event.
3. Teachers specifically build relevant activities into the specific unit. For example, Year 6 linked SDGs to their science unit via creative experiments.
4. Next, the homeroom and specialist teachers meet every six weeks to discuss and plan a new unit and work together on finding natural curriculum links.

Ruchika explains, "Teachers are showing a keen interest in learning more about the SDGs, especially in developing units that integrate the SDGs. They also want to know how we track and assess [SDGs]. Some of them have gone out to find more resources." The school hopes to offer additional workshops for the teachers to implement shared knowledge not only on sustainability but also on education itself.

Beyond the intended curriculum, the school's SDG Club is a prominent extracurricular activity supporting ESD. Students research and choose an SDG they are passionate about, articulating their reasons and vision for that goal. They are then organized into groups to actively plan and inspire others to join their cause, resulting in initiatives such as a website for SDG awareness. A new development is the integration of the SDG Club into the Student Council, aligning with the school's emphasis on student agency. This shift empowers students to drive projects, including initiatives like food sharing to reduce waste; and promoting health and well-being activities such as "playground buddies" to foster friendships during playtime.

Some examples of the Year 6 PYP Exhibition topics linked to the Global Goals



Ronnie

"I call myself a guide or facilitator. I usually greet my students by calling them 'Laoshi,' the word for teacher in Chinese. I say, 'I need to learn something from you.' That empowers them to create change. When they know that other people are interested in them and what they are doing, they are very proud and know that their actions matter."

Aligning SDGs to Curriculum Using News Stories

Ronnie, once a Global Schools Advocate, has collaborated on ESD projects with institutions like ENO in Finland and Life Link Friendship School in Sweden. He is currently a teacher at Mingdao High School, an IB school in Taichung, Taiwan. Ronnie spends his leisure time promoting the SDGs at various Taiwanese schools. He also works with Teach SDGs Taiwan, which strives to unify schools and organizations working with ESD.

Ronnie bolstered this effort by developing digital platforms ([Teach SDGs Taiwan](#) and [one for sharing SDG news](#)) for sharing resources. He also actively promotes the Global Schools Program, especially among IB teachers.

Committed to empowering fellow educators, Ronnie aims to boost their confidence, especially when they face challenges integrating actionable steps into their curriculum. Therefore, Ronnie shared the process he uses to align the curriculum with the SDGs at his school.



Ronnie first creates buy-in with the homeroom teachers and helps them look at their current units and what SDGs might integrate well. Then Ronnie helps teachers connect an article or video with one or two SDGs. Teachers and students are encouraged to use laminated SDG goal sheets to pick a goal that connects with an article from a local newspaper or video from the news. In this way, he lets others come up with their own opinions and action plans on the chosen topic. Rather than choosing a framework for his students, they do this collaboratively and map the most related SDG to a local news story.



Ronnie then uses the 5Ws questions poster in the classroom, taking students through the questions: “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where,” and “Why”. He asks students about the problems presented in the news article and how they want to solve these by achieving the chosen, mapped SDG. Students can always change their ideas or opinions, which might naturally happen after small group discussions.

This leads into a series of collaborative, action-based projects. One of the outcomes of this method is an organic farming group started by his students. Another project promoted the idea of having common tool boxes and equipment in apartments so that people could share resources in a sustainable way. The school also carries out numerous recycling projects in Taiwan connected to the environmental SDGs.

Ronnie has observed that not every student is active during their first SDG project, but by the end, most are significantly engaged. By the end of the year, the students are encouraged to complete a video presentation about the SDGs that they want to share with others. The school has an annual day to showcase the students' work and research regarding their chosen SDG. The showcase is taken very seriously amongst the community, and a plethora of resources are shared amongst those who attend. Oftentimes, parents get involved and volunteer for the day.



Throughout this process, Ronnie highlighted the importance of being open minded; it's not a competition but a collaborative experience to gain support from community members, teachers, and students alike.

In addition, Ronnie has seen that when you give teachers your time and energy it helps create a collaborative structure that has a greater impact. Ronnie encourages educators to initially try out different ideas and start with small projects involving students, parents, and the community. When students, parents, and community members buy-into this work, they will push things forward.





"Integrating SDGs has enhanced the multidisciplinary approach already being followed. You bring up any lesson or unit or chapter, and [teachers] will tell me how it is connected to SDGs...through the SDGs, we were able to bring a multidisciplinary approach to classes. All our programs have some of the 169 targets embedded in them."

Building a School-Wide ESD Movement

Seth Anandram Jaipuria School in Lucknow, India, first embraced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both Pankaj Rathore, Headmaster, and Principal Mrs. Poonam Kochitty played pivotal roles in this journey. Pankaj had championed the Advocates Program and motivated other teachers to participate.

Overall, many teachers have contributed to the Global Schools Program as Advocats, as well as their school's efforts on ESD, including Deepika Gupta, Rubi Choudhary, Shweta Awasthi, Warsha Sawant, Divya Roy, and Abhilasha Pandey Saba Ahmad. Together, they work to spread SDG awareness amongst teachers, students, and parents via a three-step process.

Pankaj first focused on school-wide assemblies as an opportunity to create whole school awareness on ESD and an environment where everyone could practice critical thinking. This was also an environment where students could reflect on the impact of their actions.

To start, teachers were asked to choose any of the 17 SDGs to integrate into the weekly morning assemblies. Some teachers used Ted Talks in the assemblies, which proved to be very effective in showcasing a global perspective. Overall, the assemblies addressed sustainable cities, reducing carbon footprints, responsible consumption, energy, life on land, the ocean, and more.

One memorable assembly was titled "What is Real Manhood?" and focused on SDG 5: Gender Equality and respecting women. Another notable assembly, which targeted social and emotional learning outcomes, was on mental well-being. Topics in this assembly included positive self-image, self-esteem, peer pressure, body shaming, and cyber safety.

During all of the assemblies, the local context was discussed, specifically on the topic of gender disparities. One outcome from the assemblies was that students pledged they would carry their own renewable water bottles and conserve energy by turning off lights and fans when leaving a room.

The second step in Pankaj's method to integrate ESD into the school community involved supporting teachers to reinforce curriculum connections with SDGs, across various subjects.

For instance, history teachers highlighted important female figures and their positive impact. In Hindi classes, the teachers emphasized SDG 5: Gender Equality using the example of the "Queen of Jhansi", underscoring that bravery is universal and not gender-specific. Gender equality discussions were also integrated in the Class VIII science lessons, focusing on the biological changes teenagers undergo and the importance of good health and well-being, linking to both SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being. To promote respect and conservation for nature (SDG 15: Life on Land), students from Class VI were encouraged to study the diversity of plants in the school garden and engage in discussions about soil erosion, coupled with climate action topics. To promote global perspectives and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, a teacher initiated a cultural exchange with a Pakistani school to promote the idea that: "the world is one family".



Beyond traditional lessons, co-scholastic activities also played a role in SDG-integration. The music teacher championed awareness through social media and song lyrics, and the school's Inter-House Music Competition required that each song have a theme related to an SDG. Sports drills incorporated themes from Michael Jackson songs to address threats like plastic pollution.

In addition to teacher-led innovations in the classroom, the school's formal curriculum also evolved in response to the ongoing sustainability initiatives.

For instance, after the COVID-19 pandemic, a comprehensive health curriculum was introduced, emphasizing personal well-being and community health. Lessons on the excretory system were connected to sustainable waste management (SDG 12: Responsible Consumption), with students exploring biohazardous waste management in hospitals, linking to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being.

All of these efforts trickled through the school, spanning to other teachers who weren't Advocates, helping them draw connections to sustainable development in their lessons.





Third, the parent community was engaged through campaigns, videos, parent-orientation programs, and parent-teacher meetings. Parents contributed to community service initiatives and school-wide events, which also incorporated the SDGs.

Pankaj noted that it was crucial to involve parents in order to promote the SDGs at his school. Every attempt was made to educate the parent community about the SDGs in order to come together to achieve this common goal. The parents are made aware in various forums including parent teacher meets and parent orientation programs, by sharing assembly videos and campaigns on sustainable acts, through Annual Day programs, tree plantation drives, food donation drives and by involving them and seeking their support in community service initiatives.



School-wide events and initiatives also included the participation of parents and the wider community. Some examples included: a massive school tree-planting drive; incorporating SDGs into the Annual Inter-School Festival which involves 1,000 children from 50 schools; hosting a youth competition for 800 local participants around the theme of a SDGs. The school also hosted an Earth Day event where students made newspaper bags, small plastic bottle planters, and more items using upcycled materials.

A school-wide approach

1. Gain school leadership and administrative support across the school.
2. Use school-wide assemblies to create awareness on ESD and build spaces for critical thinking and collaboration.
3. Support teachers to create curriculum connections with the SDGs, ensuring all disciplines are incorporated, such as music and sports.
4. Engage the parent community in campaigns, videos, parent-orientation programs, and parent-teacher meetings.
5. Involve the community in service initiatives and school-wide events to create a common goal.

Samina and Dilnaz

“ESD cannot be seen from a lens separate from the daily curriculum at school. [It] must be seamlessly blended in the everyday classroom discourse in order for it to truly bring about changes in student attitudes and actions.” - Samina Agwan

Inspiring Students to Lead Through Questioning and Interviews

At Universal School, there is a focus on incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all activities. The school is very passionate about constant professional development to stay up to date with the dynamic field of education, and therefore, school leadership was positive and supportive with respect to the Global Schools Program and adapting ESD across the school.

Global Schools Advocates, Samina Agwan and Dilnaz Bharucha, were provided with resources, time, and a team of teachers at their school. They relied on the Global Schools Advocate Handbook and Advocate Toolkit as their main references for crafting lesson plans. Utilizing these resources, they meticulously developed grade-specific PowerPoint presentations and worksheets to seamlessly incorporate into their daily teaching. To foster student engagement and relate the project to their daily lives, they allocated significant time for in-class discussions and interactions with family and the broader community. By utilizing formative assessments, they effectively translated lesson objectives into successful, actionable outcomes.

Samina and Dilnaz purposefully focused on activities where students conducted conversations with others in order to see different perspectives and better understand their place in the world.

For example, they led a rewarding Changemakers project with eighth-grade students. The project involved carrying out interviews with individuals from diverse backgrounds who were making impactful changes in the local communities. The purpose was to demonstrate to young students that changemakers are ordinary people who choose to be part of the solution.



One particularly enlightening interview featured a young women's rights activist, Ms. Taibat Hussain, from Nigeria. During the course of the discussion, the eighth-grade student interviewer drew similarities in the challenges faced by women in Nigeria and India. Despite the cultural, social, and geographical differences, both nations were fundamentally striving for the same objectives within their country's women's rights movement, underscoring the universality of the cause.

Another interview within the Changemakers project was centered around a climate activist, Mr. Shikhar Agarwal. This dialogue provided a unique opportunity for the eighth-grade student interviewer to voice her views and expectations regarding the older generations' role in preserving the delicate balance of the planet for her own generation. It showcased the powerful intergenerational discourse that is a critical aspect of addressing climate change and fostering sustainable environmental practices.

In another example, seventh-grade students engaged in a thought-provoking project addressing injustice and prejudice. This initiative encouraged students to explore their personal perspectives on injustice and its meaning.

Classroom techniques

1. Allocate significant time for in-class discussions and interactions.
2. Translate lesson objectives into successful, actionable outcomes.
3. Focus on activities where students engage with other individuals outside the classroom.
4. Foster communication about personal perspectives and the broader meaning of SDG topics.

The seventh-grade students had enriching conversations with both peers and family members, delving into diverse viewpoints on the concept of injustice and actively seeking to comprehend the complex web of factors influencing societal attitudes of individuals in their lives.

These types of activities supported the students in practicing skills such as perspective taking and engaging in global dialogues. The activities also sought to instill empathy in the students.

To take initiatives one step further, all activities and events during the academic year at Universal School are planned around a yearly theme. The theme for 2021-2022 was the UN SDGs. During this time, the school wanted to dive deeper into SDGs by taking part in the British Council's International Dimension in Schools Project. They also chose sub themes to focus on for the year, such as: Media: The Great Equalizer, Entrepreneurship, Our Natural Heritage, A Gender Equal World and so on. Due to these continuous efforts, the team and students were well aware of the SDGs and their importance. This also helped the Advocates seamlessly carry out classroom activities within the framework of the Global Schools Program that were aligned with their own curriculum.

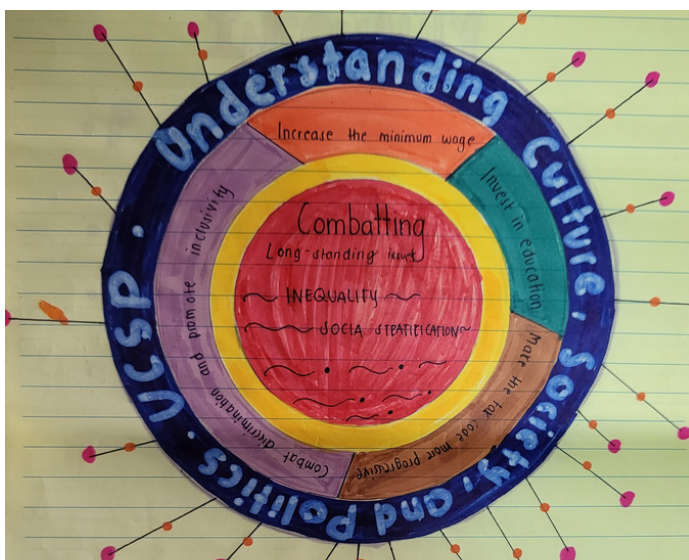


Mariel

"Incorporating SDGs in my lessons opened many doors. It created a platform for my students to think of creative ways to address issues that our community was facing. With that, seeing them working together passionately to encourage and to empower others about mental health was memorable and something to be proud of."

Connecting ESD to Your Students' Local Context

Mariel Precious Joy C. Gardose is a secondary education teacher that teaches a variety of subjects across ethics, religious studies, and global citizenship. Mariel was most excited to become an Advocate so she could integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into her discussions and lessons in class. Through the Global Schools Program, she was given an opportunity to educate students about SDGs while empowering them to join the collective action in promoting the SDGs.



During her time as an Advocate, Mariel's school was very supportive of her work and the ESD framework. Her school helped Mariel in conducting her first workshop to introduce sustainable development to her colleagues and teach them how to integrate SDGs into their lessons and their discussions.

Mariel shared that her school previously had been exposed to SDG-related projects and lessons, making it easier to facilitate stronger connections to the SDGs across the whole school. For example, one of the school's previous initiatives was to integrate issues such as human rights, inequality and environmental issues into classroom discussions.

However, during her time as an Advocate, Mariel used the SDGs to establish a more impactful integration into school-wide practices. Mariel led workshops for the staff and also for the student-leaders at her school, encouraging them to continue their leadership journey while making connections to their actions and the SDGs.

One example was a discussion related to SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being. Mariel and her students discussed SDG 3 and created posters to promote well-being and mental health. Because of this, students became more aware of their responsibility to create an environment wherein understanding, love, respect, and empathy are prevalent. Seeing her students work together to raise awareness on mental health was one of Mariel's most memorable and impactful moments as a Global Schools Advocate.

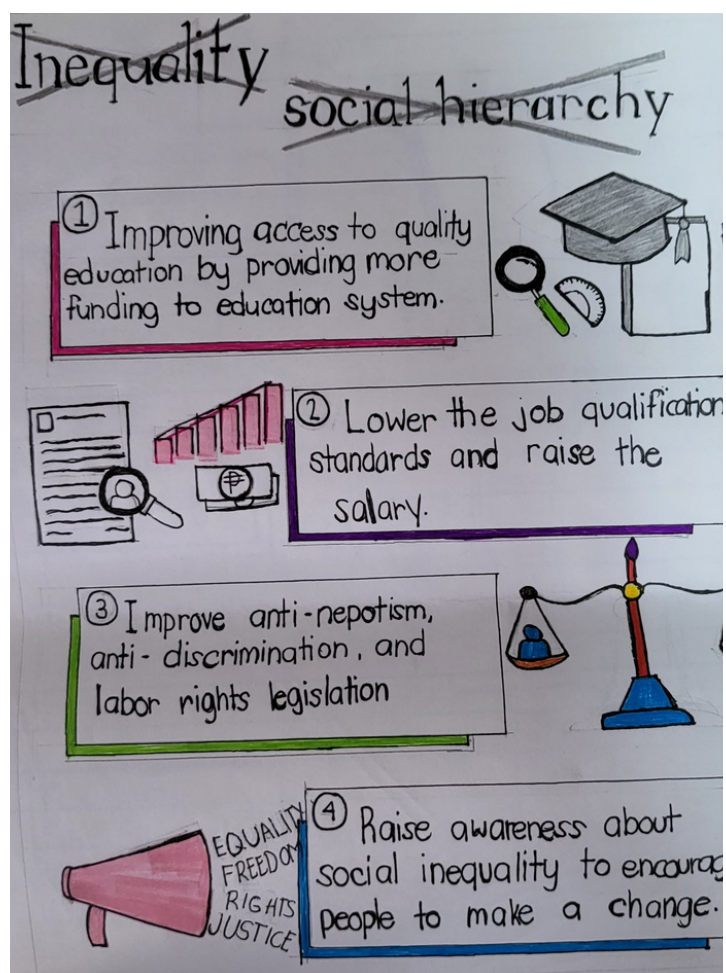


Mariel noted that her students became more critical and creative thinkers as a result of promoting ESD in her classroom. They were not only recipients or receivers of information, but used what they learned to become more proactive citizens in their community. Incorporating the SDGs in her lessons opened many doors and created a platform for Mariel's students to think of creative ways to address issues. Finally, Mariel notes the ESD framework created unique opportunities for collaboration.

Mariel's advice for other Advocates is to,

"Familiarize yourself with the needs of your students and your community so that you can be more intentional with your teaching strategies and with integrating SDGs in your lessons."

Mariel said one challenge she found – which ended up turning into an opportunity – was to change her pedagogical approach regarding the strategies she used to make sure that the learning environment was meaningful, relevant, and contextualized to the students' experiences. Mariel explained that she is grateful for the Global Schools Program because it has given her the opportunity to explore diverse resources and bring them into her classroom.



Oceania



Geoff
Australia



"Being an Advocate has been validating and given me a new lease of life professionally. It's really exciting to be involved and see others getting on board. I feel that we are making inroads in education and changing the way we think about pedagogy, teaching, and learning."

Incorporating ESD into Classrooms and Policy

Geoff Holt has worked at Busselton Senior High School (BSHS) for fifteen years during which time he has been a Level 3 Program Coordinator (Middle School), Head of Year 9 & 10, and Level 3 Humanities teacher (Lead teacher). Upon moving to BSHS from Perth, Geoff was keen to engage students in practical and project-based curricula including environmental recovery, caring for their country, and global citizenship activities. Having coordinated many programs and projects over this time involving thousands of students, Geoff was excited to become a Global Schools Advocate and focus on the Global Goals with students and colleagues.

Geoff's work around the goals involved leading the Student Council and integrating projects into the curriculum with his own classes, whilst he constantly sought additional time and resources to enable him to expand and further develop Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across the school. At the end of 2021, Geoff left Student Services to focus 100% of his effort on ESD.

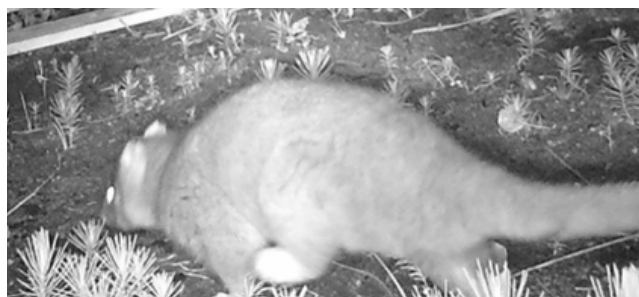
In recognizing the importance of his work in this area, the school principal allocated Geoff 0.2 time to enable him to coordinate ESD across the school and lead the ESD Professional Learning Community (PLC), which was established in 2021.

Twelve members of the school staff, including two non-teachers, joined the ESD professional learning team and started their individual learning journeys toward ESD. A number of his colleagues applied to become Global Schools Advocates, and two of them were successful, with the rest applying the principles of practical project-based learning to the work they do with their students in diverse contexts across various year levels, groups, and subject disciplines.

The PLC met twice per term. Each teacher came up with an ESD project with Geoff assisting with program design, coordination, and mentoring.

Examples of the projects undertaken include:

- A science educator ran a program to monitor endangered Quenda (Bandicoots) in a local reserve. Previously, the reserve had been damaged by bushfires, rendering the animals at extra risk of predation by foxes and feral cats.
- Reece Towers worked with a dozen students who volunteered their time to build and install Quenda sanctuaries in Meelup Regional Park.
- Woodwork teacher, Geoff Thomson, assisted the students in converting recycled wooden pallets covered in hessian into sanctuaries. Reece then worked with local Environment Officer, Joe Casperz-Loney, and PhD student, Gillian Bryant, to gather data about the fauna visiting the sanctuaries and captured them on the stealth cameras installed by the students. The cameras not only identified Quenda activity in the sanctuaries but also Echidnas which were not known to be in the park. The students were involved at every stage of the process from planning to inception and monitoring. They learned that the sanctuaries helped endangered fauna evade predation and also to understand the urgency of environmental recovery in the area for the survival of many species.
- Another member of the school staff, Pippa Edmonds, engaged her humanities students in helping to revegetate the area and prevent the spread of Die-Back (*Phytophthora Cinnamomi*), a pathogen that kills trees from the top down. Pippa and Geoff took 50 students to the site working with local volunteers and experts to install dozens of coir logs which help prevent water run-off after the rain and thus reduce the spread of the pathogen. The project then formed the basis of an in class assessment and research project.
- Pippa also engaged her Year 8 students in a variety of brushing activities in the Margaret River Area, again working with local environmentalists. The students cut back overgrown vegetation and placed it carefully in eroded areas along the coastline to both prevent foot traffic and enable the seeds to germinate in the winter to come, thus helping to re-establish vegetation in areas damaged by erosion.



- All Year 9 students took part in a project to revegetate a section of Carbaunp Reserve, a critical area of remnant Jarrah Forest of high conservation value in the SW Cape. Students planted over 2,000 native trees over two days after learning about the cultural significance of the area and its history to the Aboriginal Wadandi (Saltwater) custodians of the area. Whilst this was an environmental project, it revealed fascinating insight into the socio-economic history of the area both before and after European arrival. Students were able to learn about the inherently sustainable manner in which the Wadandi people cared



for the country over tens of thousands of years, using fire to manage vegetation and fuel load. They learned that after European arrival, trees were felled in their millions, the earth used to farm non-native crops, and invasive species were introduced. Native custodians lost access to their ancestral lands and were used as cheap or even free labor to farm potatoes and subjected to forced removal by the authorities. Geoff explains there is only a more recent appreciation of how well Aboriginal people cared for their land and maintained a delicate balance, which has been seriously disrupted by human impact, introduced species, and climate change. The richness of such learning opportunities is hard to overstate and has a powerful and lasting impact upon students.

- Another project involved having groups of at-risk students with poor attendance and participation rates care for the country by undertaking clean-ups along the coastline in Ngari Marine Park. The students gathered and classified marine waste washed up on the shores of over a 5 km stretch of coast and entered the data onto logs. This was collated and shared with the Australian Marine Debris Initiative, a nationwide body which promotes awareness and waste source reduction. The indigenous students in particular engaged particularly well with this project as it enabled them to learn about the country and share their cultural understanding with their peers.
- Year 7 science teachers, Ali Holt and Sarah Van Gool, have worked with Geoff over the past two years to integrate the school's Waste & Sustainability Program into the science curriculum. The program sees all Year 7 classes undertake waste collection and recovery activities whereby



and recovery activities whereby they each take ownership of waste stations, collecting and processing organic waste, paper and card as well as drinks containers. All items are recovered, reused, or recycled. The students recover and process the waste and gather data on the quantities of waste involved. They undertake waste audits, and they have succeeded in reducing the amount of waste going to the landfill by more than 60% over a two year period. Teachers have used the data as part of science investigations and tasked the students with finding ways to improve the school's performance in terms of waste reduction, recovery, reuse, and recycling. This program has also been shared with Geography Ed Support teachers and students with disabilities. The Ed Support students particularly enjoy the more tactile activities of processing the organic waste, managing the worm farm, and school vegetable garden.

Activities such as these demonstrate how different members of a school's teaching staff can work on a variety of projects which are student-centered, project-based, and provide much needed agency to young people who are often subject to passive learning. For example, every student in Years 7 through 10 gets to be involved in ESD. All Year 7 students engage in literacy around Global Citizenship. In Year 8, all students work on Responsible Consumption and Waste Recovery, running the school's Waste & Sustainability Program.





Geoff's school worked with the Tenderfeet program incorporating projects with the organization at various successive grade levels in hopes to build a strong relationship with the organization. Students would be able to use their knowledge from projects completed at previous grade levels and better evaluate the impact of their work over the years. English teacher, Marion Rowe, has her students writing for impact. Her students wrote personal letters to students at the Tenderfeet School outside Kibera and took part in a large fundraiser and sponsored walk to assist at-risk children to gain access to schooling. Students learned about the gender disparity regarding access to education as well as the social, economic, and cultural barriers to education for girls in some settings.

Year 8 BSHS students run a Global Citizenship Initiative based around the Tenderfeet program that has grown to involve the entire school plus all of the local public schools, many businesses, and community groups. It has been recognised with an award from the United Nations Association of Australia (WA) for excellence in Global Citizenship Education.



The Tenderfeet Program also sees BSHS students Advocate for girls' education in slums in Kenya carried-out in whole-school assemblies. The Tenderfeet Program is run by students and involves

large numbers of organizations and supporters in the local community. It provides students from BSHS and local schools with opportunities to engage in leadership, advocacy, organization, teamwork, critical thinking, and global citizenship.

Besides his school role, Geoff sits as an executive of the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia and is actively working to promote ESD among its 18,000 strong members. The union has taken ESD on as a priority and formed an internal committee led by its Vice President, Sharmilar Nagar. They have showcased Geoff's work on ESD projects and cross curricula integration at their state conference and plan to offer professional development via their Education and Training Department.

In 2021, the Western Australia (WA) Parliament Education and Health Standing Committee held an inquiry into "The Response of Schools to Climate Change". In addition to making a written submission, Geoff was invited to give evidence to this Inquiry both as a member of the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA) Executive and on behalf of the United Nations Association of Australia of Western Australia Branch; and, as a teacher and Global Schools Advocate. The committee [has subsequently produced a report](#) with far-reaching recommendations which Geoff and others very much hope will be acted upon so that ESD and climate action are prioritized and properly resourced within schools. Geoff says, "It is on the Minister's desk and we are waiting to see what happens, hoping that we will see ESD coordination promoted and streamlined throughout the system. In this way, the entire Global Schools initiative has validated and given direction and purpose to the commitments and passions that I've had for many years."

South America





Stephanie

"The activities that can be carried out will help your students to connect to real-life, world problems. They feel another level of commitment and engagement with what you are trying to teach them."

Incorporating ESD into Classrooms and Policy

When Stephanie Arias Catalán became an Advocate, she was most excited about the opportunity to belong to a world-wide organization and share ideas with a global network of teachers while making an impact on her students.

During her Advocate mandate, her school was very supportive and receptive to her ideas. In fact, her school already had some knowledge of sustainability, for they had received a "Green Stamp" in the past for their environmental protection and action projects.



During her time as an Advocate, Stephanie carried out three main activities related to the SDGs. The most significant initiative was related to SDG 14: Life Below Water using the project-based learning (PBL) methodology.

Their project started by interviewing one of the headmasters of a nearby school, Paula, who is also a marine biologist. Then, Paula spoke to the students about the wonders of the sea and the danger of plastic. Next, in small groups, students carried out an investigation into the main water pollutants and how they have negatively impacted Chile as well as other parts of the world. After that, a representative of Plastic Oceans Chile, visited the students and explained to them how plastic can damage coastal beaches and surface waters.

Drawing from all this information, students created a comic that encouraged everyone to protect the oceans. They looked at [model comics on the United Nations website](#) for inspiration and to brainstorm ideas. At the end of the project, the comics were donated to the library to create awareness and educate and inspire other students.

To complete the project, Stephanie and her students planned to clean-up a nearby wetland that plays an important part of their local ecosystem. Stephanie received support from her administration, and other grade levels collaborated as well, along with the parent community. Students were surprised to see just how much plastic there was to clean up and how the animals were being affected by it. They even witnessed how people rode cars over the beach, destroying local fauna. The students said, "We are saving the world", and Stephanie believes the experience had a positive impact. Parents loved the activity and want to continue participating in the future.

The main changes that Stephanie saw in her students was how they became more aware of the damage that plastic creates in oceans due to a culminating, first-hand experience.

She noted they started feeling more responsible, filled with sadness and hopelessness at the start, but later, they communicated to Stephanie that they felt they were making a difference by taking action and cleaning up the wetland ecosystem.

For Stephanie, the main challenges as an Advocate were finding time to carry out similar activities. It takes large amounts of time and effort to coordinate with parents, teachers, and school staff. In addition, each school year brings about new challenges. Stephanie explains that there are more students, longer school days, and the curriculum is often extended. Teachers are also making efforts to prioritize students' mental health and emotional-well being. Despite shifts in priorities, Stephanie still plans to carry out the wetland clean-up again and continue her efforts across the school.





Fernanda

"When you start something in a community, you need commitment. Afterward, I was so grateful. With commitment and with Global Schools, we can make the change and feel happier even if it's just with a small change."

How Place-Based Education Inspired Community Change

Fernanda Freitas Rezende was well-versed in sustainability before becoming a Global Schools Advocate. She was passionate about working with local communities and completed her Master's and Ph.D. in sustainability before joining the program. She specifically became an Advocate to find practical ways to apply her Ph.D. expertise as an educator.



Fernanda had a dual role as a kindergarten teacher at CMEI Lídia Rocha Feitosa and as a primary school teacher at EMEF Edna de Mattos Siqueira Gaudio, both public schools in Vitória, in the state of Espírito Santo.

In her official position, she developed many new initiatives and experienced the impact of her projects. However, she mainly focused her Global Schools Advocacy on community outreach via a volunteer teaching role at Jesus de Nazareth, a Favela in Brazil. At the beginning of her journey with Global Schools, she joined a voluntary community clean-up, which sparked her interest in proposing a composting project within her volunteer teaching role. Fernanda convinced the school leadership to launch the composting project in order to combat the problems the region faced with excess garbage on the street.



In the community school where she developed the project, Fernanda says,

"The school didn't change, but the children changed. After the completion of the 'Letter of Wishes' something really powerful started to happen. The government officials told me they now want to develop a project, creating a natural park in the territory. Imagine a beautiful, urban park there! If politicians could always listen to children, it would be amazing!"

The project was developed with two other teachers, Damila Carvalho and Izabel Cristina Brito Rangel, and one member from the wider community, Fernando Martins. They developed the project using the activities and resources provided by the Global Schools Program.

First, students toured the surrounding locale three times so that they could observe it. When touring the community, students were able to identify problems and issues that threatened it. They were emotionally affected seeing other people who didn't have many resources, or seeing animals in distress due to a polluted environment. After many discussions that drew upon the SDGs and Agenda 2030, students were asked what would help their region to become a great place to live, focusing their ideas on inequalities. To lead this activity, Fernanda used the Global Schools grade 1 lesson plans on inequality to discuss students' wishes and hopes. Fernanda also helped the students compare their territory to other territories in Brazil.

Upon the completion of the project, students created a "Letter of Wishes" for their community and region, based on their observations of the surrounding area.



Fernanda had the idea to upscale the project in partnership with a community organization. Therefore, she submitted the students' "Letter of Wishes" and the composting project to the local city hall. In the end, and after much persistence, the students' "Letter of Wishes" was presented to the city hall in front of many attendees, including the Secretaries of Environment as well as Urban Services. Students felt as though they had a strong voice that could make a change and impact their region.

For Fernanda, the main challenge as an Advocate was that most of the teachers she worked with didn't live in the same community as the children and weren't fully aware of their needs and challenges. Through Fernanda's project, students and teachers had the opportunity to get to know their surrounding area through walks, helping them create mutual understanding with students, and avoiding preconceived notions.





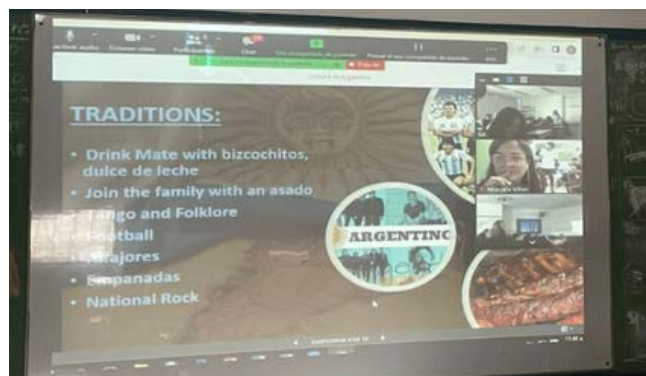
Marcela

"To reach the agenda and to create global citizens, we need to have students build empathy on all the issues that we are seeing around the world. Raising awareness is very important, as not all of the schools in Argentina are working with the SDGs."

Approaches to ESD: Project Based-Learning and Global Dialogues

Marcela's Villan's school is bilingual, creating a greater space to work with the Global Goals, which was already occurring before she became a Global Schools Advocate. When Marcela became an Advocate, the heads of the secondary school were supportive and enthusiastic about the SDGs. Marcela was appointed as the Department Head of Environmental Sciences, giving her more leverage to integrate SDGs in the school. In her new role, she was responsible for all curricular projects from year 1 to 6 at the secondary level.

One of the most important projects Marcela worked on was in connection with SDG 4, where she engaged in an exchange with a Kahuma refugee camp. Marcela and her students taught refugee students different aspects of life in Argentina so that they could learn about Argentinian culture. In return, through video calls and sessions, her students got a better, first-hand experience of the daily lives of their peers. They also were exposed to the challenges of living in a refugee camp, enlarging their vision of the world around them.



From this experience, Marcela understood the value of making sure education does not just stop at the classroom door. She says that connecting classes to the world encourages students to become lifelong learners, seeking knowledge and solutions beyond those presented in their formal education.

Marcela's students also worked on a project with schools around the world as part of the Take Action Global "Climate Action Project". Students first gained awareness about what is happening in connection with climate change in Argentina and internationally. Then they connected with different schools in order to

understand what other countries are doing to combat climate change, all while working through peer-to-peer education methods.

In addition, Marcela's students participated in numerous debates with students from other countries on SDG-related topics. These debates are part of an initiative called the Global Teachers Club.

Also, Marcela focused on introducing students to the SDGs via project-based learning so that they could make real life connections and take action in their community. One of these projects investigated plastic pollution through the lens of SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. This particular group of students reached out to a local organization, [Llena una botella de amor](#) (fill a bottle with love), which made eco-bricks that were used to building furniture such as tables.

The organization visited Marcela's school to explain their project and create awareness regarding the importance of recycling and reusing plastic. Marcela's school worked with this organization to



collect the plastic bottles, and once they hit a certain quantity, students dropped the bottles off at a local collection point where the plastic waste was collected for recycling projects. [Llena una botella de amor](#) was in charge of picking up the bottles and creating plastic wood and eco-bricks together with [Econciencia Argentina](#).

Learning from others through dialogue and shared experiences is one of the most important takeaways from Marcela's experience as an Advocate. Being able to work together, collaborate, and listen are important skills. She notes that if the world can work together and create a community of change, it will improve.

For example, when Marcela started taking action, her students were a bit hesitant. But once they started to see that taking action made a difference, they couldn't stop. Her students began drawing connections to even more actions and SDGs. Marcela adds,

"That's why I love the idea of promoting and raising awareness with others."



Africa

Ogunsakin
Nigeria

Lydia
Nigeria

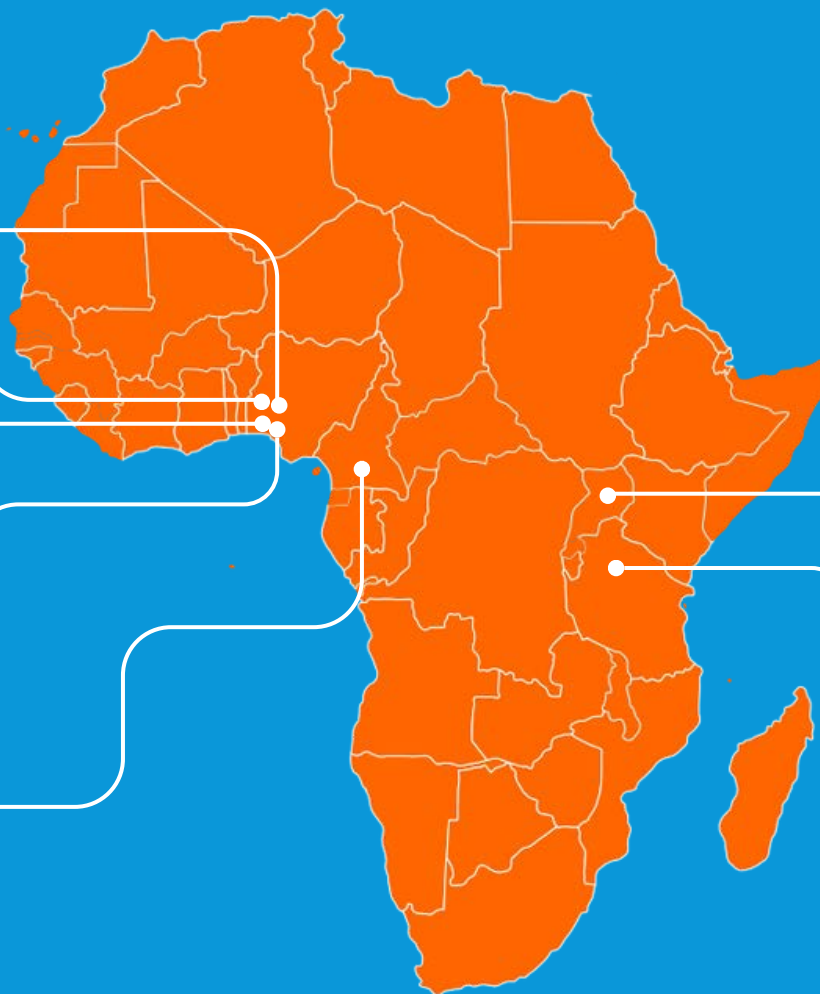
Busayo
Nigeria

Helen
Nigeria

Ebot
Cameroon

Grace
Uganda

Shedluck
Tanzania





“The school culture has shifted from being self-centered to thinking more about others. Teachers now initiate their own projects with their students and are taking a much more student-led approach to teaching and learning.”

Creating Impact Beyond the Classroom

Lydia Chinonye Chilaka is a Principal Education Officer and a chemistry teacher for tenth through twelfth-grades and completed her initial advocacy work at Meiran Community Senior High School in Lagos State, Nigeria. Upon becoming a Global Schools Advocate, Lydia incorporated multiple SDGs into her classroom lessons and activities, which benefited approximately 500 students. Lydia carried out impactful projects as an Advocate, including: an event for the International Day of the Girl Child; creating an SDG mural; developing a unit where students completed project-based, community research; running a weekly, student-led SDG radio talk; overseeing a student-initiated litter policing squad; and supporting the upcycling of old clothes into reusable shopping bags.



However, Lydia explained it was still difficult to create school-wide buy-in and systematically integrate ESD into her school and community. SDGs had taken hold, but more support was necessary to make lasting curricular changes.

Therefore, to create buy-in, Lydia approached the school administration so that they realized the value of ESD activities in order to infuse them more intentionally in students' learning. She also helped the administration realize that creating ESD activities did not have to lead to extra costs for the school, if done correctly.

Lydia discovered that many of her colleagues had a common misconception about the SDGs and interpreted working with the SDGs as carrying out recycling projects. Lydia believed a more in-depth understanding of the SDGs was needed and therefore, she engaged 30 educators and administrators in her school-wide activities and hosted informal workshops on ESD that unpacked ESD competencies and pedagogies.

As a chemistry teacher, Lydia attests that when using an SDG-lens, her students were able to better understand an abstract subject. Using ESD helped students relate better to otherwise difficult topics when they could connect subject matter to real-life problems. This proved to be true when her students' performance rose from less than 13% in 2020 to a back to back 100% in 2021 and 2022 on the yearly West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations.

In addition, students participating in her SDG club for one year were able to interact with students in other countries via the Global Schools Program; and many founding members of the club showed improved academic performance and were appointed by the school as prefects.

Furthermore, Lydia's students qualified to represent her State at a national entrepreneurial competition, which they won due to their underlying knowledge of the SDGs. Her students presented reusable shopping bags upcycled from old jeans, as well as reusable sanitary pads, which were a major hit since disposable pads are often unaffordable. The students emerged as first place winners across the entire country of Nigeria at the competition in Abuja; and they were invited by the State Commission of Education to a press conference to congratulate them.



Lydia used this success to further increase her position as an educator, changemaker, and subject matter expert on ESD across her community. In 2022, Lydia was nominated by her district for the Nollyfans Teacher Excellence Award where she was awarded a 'Teacher of Repute'.

Her activities also caught the attention of her school's district office, and she became part of a team that trained SDG coordinators from 99 schools after the state mandated SDG clubs in all public institutions. Lydia's role was to carry out training sessions for coordinators and students, helping other teachers infuse SDGs into curriculum and lesson plans via specific activities that supported ESD learning outcomes.

Lydia's advice to other teachers is to start incorporating sustainable development into their teaching in any little way possible. After her journey as an Advocate, she sees the momentum only building.





"Work tirelessly to promote Education for Sustainable Development. You are preparing an educated generation to solve environmental, economic, and social problems."

Embedding Gender Equality in School-Wide Activities

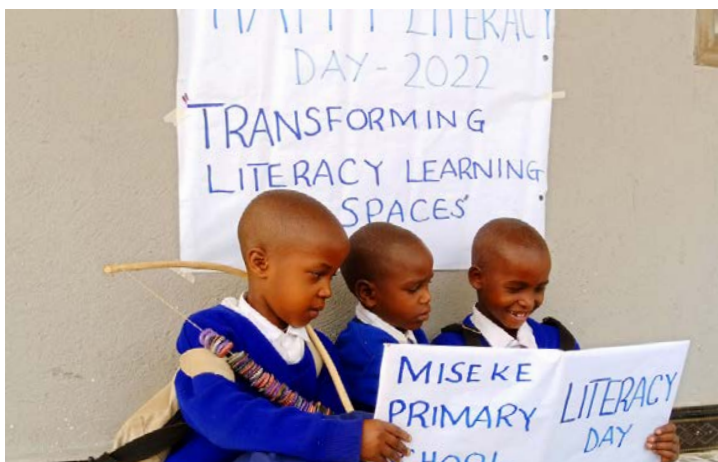
Shedluck Devis Haule is a Global Schools Advocate who teaches in the Serengeti (Mugumu) District near Serengeti National park in Tanzania. During his time as an Advocate, Shedluck decided to focus on a specific part of the sustainable development agenda that was locally relevant, where he felt as if he could make a positive impact in his community.

In his surrounding area, Shedluck observed that female students missed school more than male students, sometimes for extended periods of time, in order to support their families during the harvesting period, in the market, or with other household chores.

Therefore, Shedluck decided to raise awareness of this disparity by preparing an educational session for the community, titled: "The Power of Women in Changing their World." Shedluck invited all the girls from his school from standard 3 to standard 7 (grades 3 to 7) to this session. At the event, Shedluck discussed the importance of education and focused on girls' influencing the world, showcasing local and international women heroes. He extended this workshop to the entire school, providing everyone with more knowledge on how to support girls, especially parents.



Afterward, Shedluck selected school-wide activities that would support the integration and participation of all genders in the school. To provide a framework and calendar for his activities, Shedluck used the UN International Days, specifically the International Day of the Girl Child. Shedluck proposed daily activities in the school that were linked with UN Days. During the year, the school celebrated the International Day of the Girl Child, the International Day of Education, International Literacy Day, International Women's Day, World Wildlife Day, and World AIDS Day as a part of their efforts to integrate ESD themes into learning and the school environment. In addition, he started an extracurricular club related to the SDGs, always keeping a gender-inclusive approach in mind.



While carrying out his activities, Shedluck incorporated pedagogies that supported ESD-learning outcomes, specifically experiential learning methods and place-based learning. He and his students visited local sites such as rivers and national parks to learn about the importance of keeping water bodies clean for the benefit of human health. They also visited local industries in Miseke village to learn how to process cassava into flour. This taught students how agriculture contributes to the availability of food, economic growth, and stability. Soon, he started noting changes in his students, in particular a decrease in the amount of litter and waste around the school.

However, in taking ESD school-wide and embracing the whole-of-school approach, the first challenge for Shedluck was building cooperation amongst the teachers. Shedluck noted that in his school, there were only 8 teachers for 500 pupils, meaning that all of the educators were already extremely busy.

Shedluck found that once he started carrying out activities and sharing photos and videos of the impact being made with the students, fellow colleagues became more interested in ESD. At times he struggled with sufficient resources and access to reliable technology, but that didn't stop him from being able to recruit three teachers to support him in his ESD activities. Shedluck also commented that in some cases the school itself didn't have the facilities to host the activities, such as a lack of posters and other supplies to celebrate Shedluck's International Days.

Shedluck believes increased training on the benefits of ESD will be helpful in the future to support his school and his colleagues in continuing to integrate ESD in their school community.





"When you use your skills and put ESD into practice, this is how you know you are truly an Advocate. [Teaching] is not just working, but it's implementing actions in the classroom. This is my drive and motivation, and this is the catalyst that is pushing me to achieve SDG 4."

Teaching Literacy Through an Extra-Curricular SDG Club

Ogunsakin Oluwasegun Dare is a primary school teacher and was wrapping up the school year in July when he became an Advocate. He started his mandate by signing the Global Schools Pledge on behalf of the school. He also created a draft proposal of the activities he would carry out as a Global Schools Advocate. The head teachers and the principal agreed that incorporating the Global Schools Program's mission would enlighten their students, particularly by seeking to promote 21st-century skills.

To specifically gain further buy-in, Oluwasegun carried out workshops with all teachers to ensure colleagues understood sustainable development, the SDGs, and Global Schools' mission. Oluwasegun presented examples and videos of past Advocate's projects and initiatives demonstrating how the Global Schools methodology for incorporating ESD can smoothly integrate into current practices and curriculum, in order to enhance and support what is already being done.



In September, after getting school-wide buy-in, Oluwasegun started implementing student projects. First, he created a banner and launched the Sustainable Development Children's Club for 150+ students aged 6–13. On Fridays, school closed at 1pm, and Oluwasegun used the afternoon time to host the club. Each week, the students discussed a different sustainable development theme. Most of the children participating were from low-income communities, who didn't have consistent access to education, and Oluwasegun always provided creative sustainable development examples that were relatable to the students' communities. The club mainly focused on literacy skills and debating skills, and he distributed books to his learners.

Oluwasegun received full support from the other teachers in the school. These educators were key stakeholders and had built solid relationships with the students. Even though there were only seven teachers in the entire school, they all volunteered to attend the Sustainable Development Children's Club and oversaw classroom management and coordination. Beyond the club, Oluwasegun was able to incorporate sustainable development into the school's pre-existing school farming program, where students worked in a community garden.

After the official Advocate's program graduation, Oluwasegun still continued the club. One of the major initiatives was the "My Book and I" initiative. This involved renovating the school library and creating instructional pictures on the SDGs. This allowed the school to connect literacy skills to exams, assessments, and changes of behavior; it gave the students an opportunity to contribute to a long-lasting initiative in the school.

Oluwasegun says,

"In the end, the club impacted [students'] knowledge, their perceptions of their community, and their academic performance. I even noticed small changes in how [students] drew the trees and the ocean."

Oluwasegun shares that one of his challenges was the lack of physical materials. He used his own funds to print everything, and his personal income went toward the school's SDG banner. With 150 students to teach, he was frustrated with the limited resources and materials he had at his disposal for his learners.

Now Oluwasegun is a Global Schools Mentor. His role is to help other teachers navigate local complexities when integrating sustainable development into schools. His advice, especially to young teachers, is, "When you use your skills and put ESD into practice, this is how you know you are truly an Advocate. [Teaching] is not just working, but it's implementing actions in the classroom. This is my drive and motivation, and this is the catalyst that is pushing me to achieve SDG 4."





“Let us all join hands to provide sustainable development education for all people. This is the journey we need to take forward. The future of this world requires that all citizens master the world’s challenges and think of solutions.”

Weaving The SDGs into Rural Communities During COVID

Upon becoming a Global Schools Advocate, Nabuduwa Grace Olive Musingo was most excited about meeting other people to work together to achieve the SDGs. She is currently a Headteacher and Principal at an all-girls secondary school. However, during Grace’s entire mandate, schools in Uganda faced nationwide closures because of COVID-19. Due to the lockdown, and with no access to her school or students, Grace had to become even more creative to promote ESD.



Approximately six weeks into her mandate as an Advocate, Grace organized a community meeting with teachers, not only from her own school but also from other schools in the area. After sensitizing teachers on the relevance and importance of ESD, Grace organized homeschooling sessions at community center hubs where she introduced youth to sustainable development, focusing primarily on SDG 4: Quality Education. She also traveled to different districts where she met with groups of people and introduced them to the SDGs. Community momentum was building, and Grace was invited to speak at Gayaza High School Farm Camp to participants from various backgrounds including both local and international teachers, students, businessmen, farmers, government officials, and UN Resident Coordinator Officials. During her presentation, she shared with participants how to integrate SDGs into classrooms, curricula, and school activities, guiding attendees through specific actions to become active global citizens.

In order to reach students during lockdown, Grace organized a 3-day workshop in her rural village for 100+ girls. The primary focus was on SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 4: Quality Education, and SDG 5: Gender Equality; specific topics included growth and development, menstrual hygiene, COVID-19, HIV/Aids, early pregnancy, and the importance of the girl child. Workshop attendees also learned how to make reusable sanitary pads. In addition to the youth participants, 40 community members were also in attendance, and their sessions focused on how families can play a role in education and the wellbeing of communities. This workshop was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance, as well as representatives from wildlife organizations in Uganda. The officials also had the opportunity to share on SDG topics and discuss how community members could be part of solutions and take action.

Due to her efforts, Grace was selected to be a formal facilitator for other teachers in preparation for the reopening of schools in Uganda. In total during her time as an Advocate, Grace worked directly with 600+ teachers and school admins, as well as 900+ community members and parents. Additionally, Grace engaged in community outreach on the radio, and her sessions reached over 10,000+ audience members. Her training courses created a spillover effect, with many teachers reporting that they also educated others based on what they learned in her workshops.

As a culmination of all of her efforts, Grace received national attention and recognition for her work when she was invited to the Prime Minister's office to discuss how schools could be part of the national SDG-engagement strategy. She also received support from other UN offices, with UNDP providing banners and promotional materials to issue at all of her events. Even though Grace's school was closed her entire time as an Advocate, she still succeeded in bringing ESD to the wider community through radio, homeschooling groups, and community workshops, revealing the power that one person can have, despite lacking day-to-day access to a classroom.

When Grace's school finally reopened, she was already an SDG-expert. Grace's students have formed an SDG Club and have held various assemblies on sustainable development, giving presentations on topics they are most interested in. Students are tasked to write stories that incorporate sustainable development, and they share them every Monday.

Grace's students also participated in a design-thinking challenge, where they raised awareness of teenage pregnancy through podcasts, videos, and campaigns, for which they won \$2,500 to continue their work.





“Teachers in low-income countries often aren’t recognized, and for [those] tak[ing] on a project on SDGs as a teacher, [they] need to have strong emotional intelligence and a mindset to address issues that come up when engaging in projects.”

The Importance of Understanding Teachers’ Mindsets

Before becoming a Global Schools Advocate, Ozioma Helen Umeobieri had already been working with the SDGs in a school garden project when teaching agricultural science during her Nigerian national service, as she is a trained Agricultural Science and Biology teacher. However, after the Global Schools Advocate training, she learned how her previous efforts were aligned with ESD, connected to problem solving, and how to apply ESD via a school-wide approach.



To start embedding a school-wide approach to ESD, Helen conducted three workshops for fellow teachers during her mandate as an Advocate. Her workshops structure was as follows:

- The vision and mission of the Global Schools Program and key objectives;
- Introducing the SDGs;
- Global citizenship education;
- UNESCO's learning objectives on ESD;
- An overview of Nigeria's ranking on the SDGs according to the UN SDSN's Sustainable Development Report.

In addition, Helen focused on sharing extracurricular activities that would help students develop ESD competencies and 21st century-skills. These activities included: having students design SDG playcards; an SDGs awareness program; a walking campaign in commemoration of World Food Day; an SDGs club including weekly meetings and project presentations; a quiz on SDGs; and, inviting guest speakers to the school in commemoration of UN international days.



One of the major challenges she encountered when implementing this approach was the perception of some teachers who believed that she was being paid by the United Nations as a Global Schools Advocate, due to the level of passion she dedicated to the program. Another challenge was time, as there are many part-time teachers in Nigeria; and the workshops required additional time and often conflicted with teaching hours and responsibilities. This stemmed from a deeper problem that Helen discovered regarding mindsets. For Helen, it was difficult to assist educators in embracing changes and accepting new pedagogies. She learned,

“Individuals have a different understanding of advocacy and so there is a need for effective communication and transparency by Advocates in order to get the full support of fellow teachers in executing their mandate.”

Advice to impact mindsets

1. Understand the nature of the community where you are working
2. Build relationships with the people you are working with so you can create a positive impact
3. Foresee the challenges that will come in order to be prepared to face them; for example, when Helen's community faced power supply issues.

After the formal Advocates' graduation, Helen joined an alliance of Advocates from other countries including Argentina, Poland, India, Ghana, and more; she works with them to carry out projects on the SDGs and mobilize others to apply for the Global Schools Advocates Program.

In addition, Helen has collaborated with United People Global; she works to transform teachers' mindsets in approaching and adopting education for sustainable development. Selected from thousands of applicants across 100+ countries, Helen's new initiative supports teachers in five low-income schools with ESD training. This experience led her to be selected as a Legacy Ambassador working to mobilize other young people in Nigeria as Sustainability Leaders,, engaging with the YALI Network Hub.

Going forward, Helen believes that expanding advocacy programs, increasing training, investing more in education, and fostering government support are crucial to engage passionate individuals in the teaching profession.



“To all who look forward to integrating SDGs in education, I will say it's impactful and transformative. If all educators actually [integrated SDGs], then we should truly achieve a sustainable planet while reducing environmental hazards; improving and sustaining natural resources; ensuring sustainable cities and communities; and guaranteeing wellbeing.”

An Advocate's Journey Bringing Sustainability to their School Community

Ebot Akoachere Christie is a secondary school biology, nutrition, and food science teacher. Her introduction to the Global Schools Program came through her colleague, Doris Wanchia, a passionate teacher deeply engaged in sustainable education.

Ebot was in the midst of writing her Master's thesis on environmental education and sustainable development. After she was selected as an Advocate, the five-month program that followed was a rich and inspiring experience. It kindled an intrinsic motivation and contributed to sustainability through her teaching, bridging the gap between theory and real-life practice for her students.

Ebot's school principal was remarkably supportive of her role as an Advocate. The principal encouraged Ebot to regularly share posts about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the staff forum and incorporate SDGs into the staff's teaching.

This not only fostered a better understanding of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) amongst colleagues but also motivated them to implement ESD in their own classrooms.

Initially, Ebot didn't have any specific initiatives or projects in mind. Still, her commitment to the Global Schools Program heightened her sensitivity to potential projects, particularly those related to protecting life on land and taking action on climate change. She wasted no time in inviting experts and organizations focused on climate issues to share their knowledge with her students.



Throughout her journey, Ebot embarked on several activities and projects. She integrated SDGs into her regular classroom lessons, ensuring students could relate their learning to the real world. Her students even created posters of the SDGs and displayed them in their classrooms as constant reminders. They also prepared and delivered informative talks on SDGs during special school events, gaining recognition for their educational presentations.



Ebot didn't stop with her students; she also conducted frequent ESD sensitization talks at departmental meetings and small staff discussion groups. As a result, many of her colleagues applied for the Global Schools Program in subsequent cohorts, and one of them was selected. Alongside all these activities, Ebot continued to engage her students in gardening projects, such as the current lettuce garden initiative.

Resource-wise, Ebot made the most of what was available. At times, she used her personal funds to acquire necessary educational materials, and the principal provided seeds for her gardening projects. Her students were her most valuable resource, always willing to contribute, which made Ebot's work considerably more manageable.

Ebot's main goal was to transfer knowledge, skills, and competencies to the students and witness them apply these acquired skills. She was overwhelmed with pride when her students confidently educated not only their peers but also students from other schools and administrators on the SDGs.

From a formative evaluation perspective, Ebot observed a significant change in her students' questioning habits. They are now keen to know which SDGs were addressed in their lessons and how those lessons aimed to solve real-world problems. This shift in attitude wasn't confined to her subject-area alone; it extended to other subjects as well across the school.

Like any meaningful endeavor, Ebot encountered challenges along the way. Initially, it was tough to implement all the learning approaches she had acquired during the training. However, with time, she gained flexibility and developed a conscious approach toward effective implementation of new pedagogies.

In her first year, she concentrated on sensitization talks and classroom lessons to create awareness amongst students and teachers, before expanding to school-wide activities.

Ebot's journey through the Global Schools Program transformed her teaching approach and ignited a passion for sustainability in her students and colleagues. Her story reveals the profound impact a single teacher can have on a school and the broader community.



“Teaching SDGs is not just about teaching SDGs, it’s about solving problems. These are people’s problems. How do we solve these problems, if we are not actively involved? Now, [my] students are more knowledgeable about SDGs...[and] are always looking forward to SDG presentations on the assembly ground.”

Cultivating a Culture of Student Leadership Through ESD

Adeyemo Busayo Victoria is a passionate biology teacher and program coordinator at her school, who seeks to impact the lives of her students and community. She knew that being a Global Schools Advocate would offer great professional development opportunities to further promote quality education and take action toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Being a biology teacher, Busayo’s favorite ESD lesson was about homeostasis, focusing on the kidney and its diseases. In one of her classes, she engaged students in a discussion on what causes various types of kidney disease. Then, they worked together to devise actions to prevent kidney disease. To carry out this activity, Busayo showed students a picture of a good kidney and then a diseased kidney, as well as a man undergoing dialysis. The students drew conclusions on what types of behaviors damage kidneys, connecting this overall to SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing. At the end of the activity, the students drew conclusions about the great need to take care of their health, the community’s health, and eat healthily.

Busayo always included a critical-thinking component in her lessons, and addressed ways for her students to take concrete action at school and beyond. For example, Busayo covered reproductive health, including female genital mutilation (FGM). Students shared their prior knowledge on this heavy topic, and Busayo navigated a class discussion on this practice. Students were tasked with informing their parents about the class discussion and to also discuss FGM on the assembly grounds of the school.

In addition, Busayo had students give group presentations on the SDGs in class and on the assembly grounds, so much so that other teachers and peers in the school would look forward to learning from Busayo’s students. Her students were also involved in a new initiative to gather plastic from around the school grounds. Busayo describes that the students were happy to sensitize the other students on plastic pollution and were excited about taking action for a sustainable environment.



Due to Busayo's approach and focus on behavioral learning outcomes, Busayo successfully cultivated a culture of student leadership and agency. She shares, "Now, when teaching students inside and out of the classroom, they are always eager to link the concept to SDGs. They say they are taking action for [SDG] 12: Responsible Consumption or they are connecting this to [SDG] 3: Good Health and Well-being. They are so eager to tell their neighbors and their parents everything they learned at school."

Because of her students' excitement for the SDGs, Busayo helped facilitate an opportunity to take their actions one-step further. Busayo organized a virtual exchange where her students had the opportunity to speak to other students in India and Brazil. Her students prepared powerpoint presentations and talked about the effects of climate change and taking action. Busayo was impressed by her students' abilities to prepare the presentations entirely independently. She says,

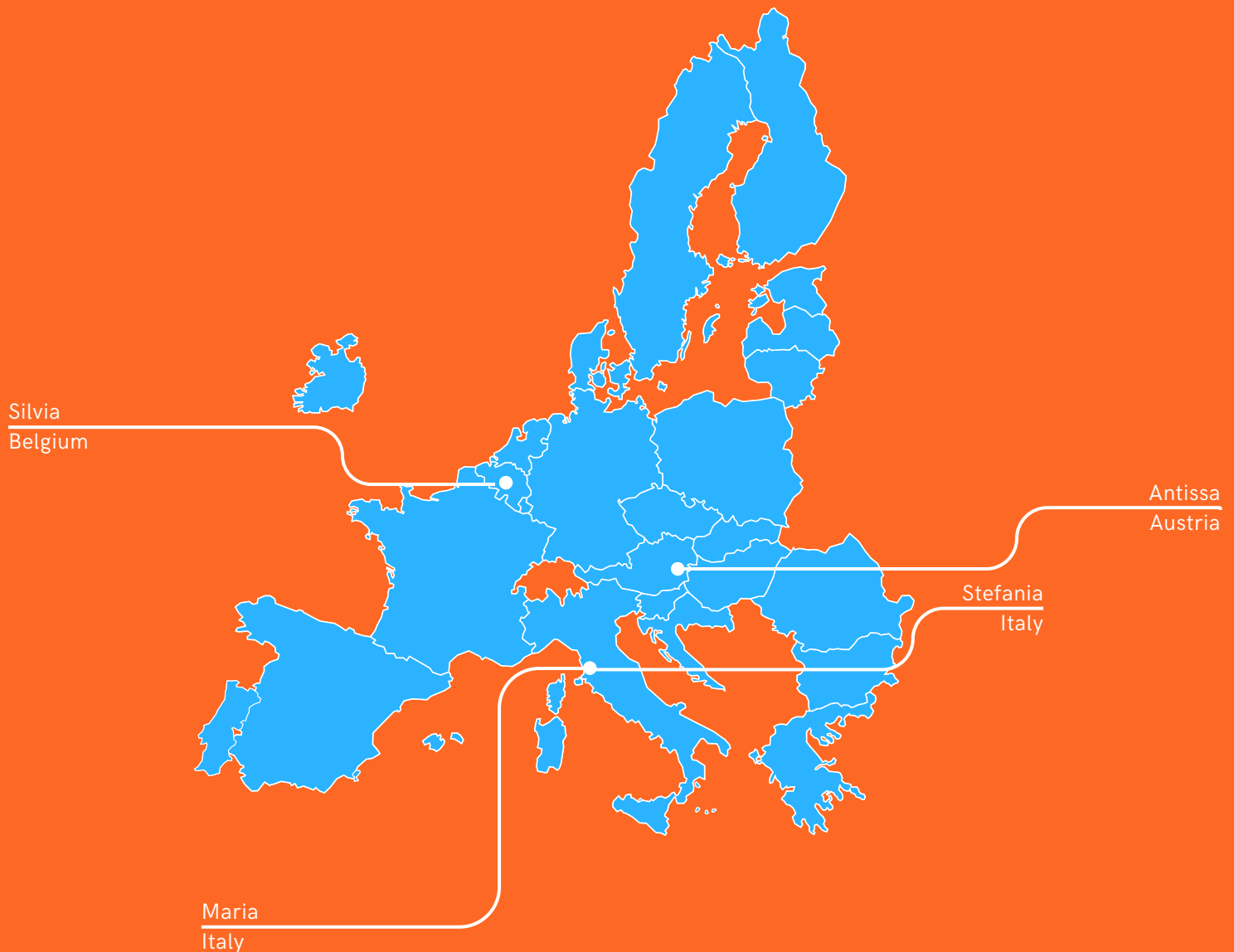
"Their confidence level has improved, and they are so eager to work with other students globally. It's my greatest joy so far."

In conclusion, Busayo's students have become teachers of the SDGs themselves. They will point out connections to SDGs after any topic is mentioned. They advocate to their parents and even bring waste from their homes to recycle at school if they don't have the opportunity to recycle at home. Overall, many more people throughout the school and community have learned about the importance of sustainable development, and as a result the school now has an SDG club.

Even though the journey was challenging at times, it was incredibly rewarding. Busayo was invited to speak at events, received formal awards and recognition due to her role as an Advocate, and was awarded a Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement award to travel to the US.



Europe





“Never give up. If you give up, other people [around you] might think that the work is too difficult. Follow through with your ideas. Take little steps, and it will be easier.”

Back-to-Back Years as an Advocate

Stefania is an English teacher at Liceo Artistico Apolloni, an art school for secondary students, located in Italy. She has been teaching for more than 25 years, and she is currently in her second year of being a Global Schools Advocate.

In her first year as an Advocate, she gained experience designing projects and curriculum that addressed the SDGs. In her second year, she focused on guiding new groups of Advocates within the region to think creatively about implementing ESD in school. She helps teachers find the right intervention points to introduce a SDG in a meaningful way that makes a real life connection to the curriculum.

To spread the message of sustainable development in her school, Stefania carried out a workshop for 100 colleagues. During the workshop, Stefania showed other educators snippets from the Global Schools Advocates Facebook group, demonstrating extraordinary examples of ESD in practice in the classroom and the school.

She also showed examples from her own classroom that portrayed issues such as gender equality, human rights, bullying, racism, global warming, the importance of quality education, and the reality of prisons,



These activities raised awareness about SDGs. Parents, fellow teachers, and students alike appreciated the work and admired it.



The colleagues that took part in Stefania's initial kick-off workshop were very interested in sustainable development and showed a further desire to talk deeper about the SDGs and be involved in concrete actions after completing the workshop.

Stefania notes that it is important to think of this work as an exchange of ideas within a community so that Advocates don't feel alone.

For example, in her school hallway, Stefania started to share the UN Days with the students as well as a corresponding catch phrase to get them to start brainstorming how they could take action. For instance, she wrote, "it's the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and we need to think about this and do something."

As a result of this initiative, a dialogue between all the teachers and students started, and small gestures have been made on these special UN Days to raise awareness amongst the student body. For World Kindness Day, students were encouraged to make a

small gesture of kindness for their friends, parents, or the school staff.

Reflecting upon her work, Stefania says that her school wasn't previously aware of ESD nor was climate change an important issue. Now, their interests have peaked, and due to her persistence, Stefania can tell things are changing in her school.

She says, "My students are not only more aware of the importance of sustainable development, but also they are eager to take action! They know what is happening outside in the world, they have opened their eyes, and they are using their brains and skills to speak up." She adds it is important to take small steps and never give up.



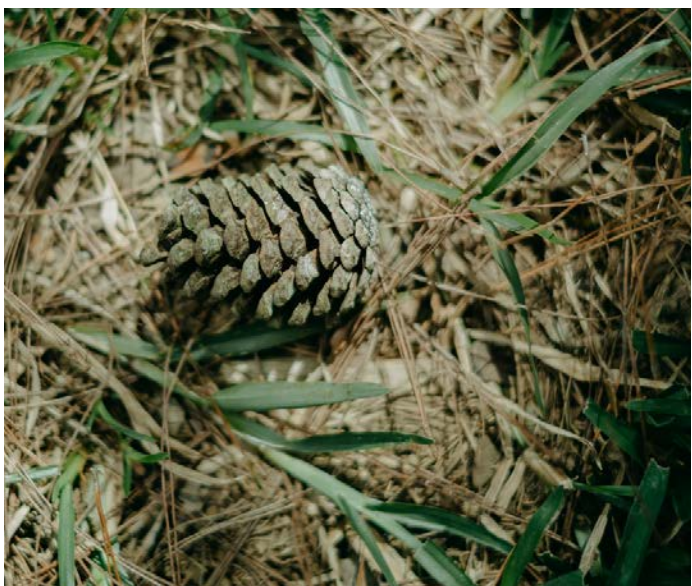


Antissa

"You realize with your team that people already do work related to the SDGs. They are just not aware that they are already doing this work. It is just not labeled as ESD/SDGs. There are many connections already happening with the SDGs, but in an ideal world, there would be more time to meet, talk, and plan."

Cultivating a Culture of Student Leadership Through ESD

When Antissa Triantafyllidou became an Advocate, she first concentrated on working with her teaching team. Working as a Grade 2 Class Teacher at an International Baccalaureate (IB PYP) school, her school's curriculum already tries to integrate the SDGs. During their weekly meetings, Antissa was able to add her input from the perspective of Global Schools and provide some ideas to her fellow colleagues. The toolkit was a useful resource that gave teachers ready-to-use lessons and projects related to the SDGs.



During her advocacy, Antissa decided to focus specifically on supporting lower primary teachers, to explore and develop age-appropriate SDGs and ESD curriculum ties.

One project Antissa worked on was looking at how much trash the students produced. While sustainability is not just about trash, it was an age appropriate topic to introduce waste management and responsible consumption to younger learners. Responsible consumption is very present in their life, whether it be at home or in the supermarket.

Another project with the students involved creating nests for animals with pinecones and placing them in the staff garden for birds.







In an ideal world, Antissa envisions having a monthly meeting across the entire primary staff in the school where they can raise questions, get feedback, and propose suggestions for integrating SDGs and ESD into the school's curriculum.

However, Antissa found it challenging to present new ideas and approaches when her school already had a well established curriculum in place. Antissa believes that open mindedness and communication are key for collaborating with other teachers to promote the SDGs and create the much needed buy-in from her colleagues. She was very conscious of the way she presented herself and her ideas. Rather than trying to change what people were already doing, Antissa validated their ideas and expressed interest in collaborating with them as an opportunity to learn from each other and problem solve together.

This is the same approach Antissa uses with her students to boost their energy, motivation, and confidence.

Throughout her time as an Advocate, Antissa reflected that teachers need more time to sit with each other and collaborate on the SDGs and ESD. When you take the time to look at what you are already doing with your students, you are able to see the already existing connections. She says,

"When we are all together, we see what we can do, what we are doing well, and how we can do better."

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Plastic 	 	 	 	 	
paper 					
metal foil 	 				
Compost bio 					



“Embedding the SDGs in the curricula offers the unique opportunity for students to develop a real understanding of the world.”

Building Community Partnerships and the Rondine Method

Maria Stella Ficai works in a network of fourteen public schools that are implementing “The Rondine Method”, which is a pedagogical approach that recognizes that learning is reinforced through the very nature of the classroom environment. The Rondine Method for secondary schools was published in a collection of best practices at the United Nations Transforming Education Summit 2022. Within this network, Stella helps plan activities to achieve SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

Beginning her Global Schools Advocate mandate in 2021, Stella built agency around ESD in her school. As a member of the school management staff, Stella was able to create a special language course called Global Citizenship Education (GCE) for eighth through twelfth-grades, with two weekly classes that integrated the SDGs into the vertical curriculum. Every year in this course, students build upon the concepts of planet, peace, and partnerships, as well as the related SDGs. Stella says,



“Few schools in Italy integrate the SDGs in their curricula. I'm striving to reverse this trend by presenting the benefits of embedding ESD in traditional Italian curricula through my network of Rondine Schools. I want to shape global citizens who can navigate the complexity of this century.”

Stella noted that connecting with stakeholders and community organizations is often an untouched and unfamiliar resource for schools. During Stella's training as a Global Schools Advocate, she learned the importance of connecting and involving stakeholders to achieve the Global Goals. As such, much of her work focused on partnerships and engaging in the wider community outside the school, in the context of the Rondine Method.

For example, Stella's students participated in a peace march in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war, with more than 1,500 students and teachers marching 10 kms towards [Rondine Cittadella della Pace](#). They listened to Russian and Ukrainian students speak about the conflict, bringing in diverse perspectives.

Furthermore, Stella and her students involved local organizations in the launch and implementation of their project, Miyazaki Tiny Urban Forest. This type of forest is a miniature urban forest which absorbs more CO2 than other type of plant and boosts the biodiversity of the landscape.

The purpose of this project was to build capacity, train, and upskill young people on agroforestry, as well as to spread awareness of the role played by forests in fighting climate change. First, the students reached out to the town hall with a proposal to build an urban forest on unused land.

Then, Stella invited local experts, rescue officers, and young entrepreneurs to help students understand the damage caused by climate change and give the students opportunities to ask questions. The project ended up being implemented in partnership with CREA (National Research Centre for Forestry and Wood), which offers its scientific and technologically-advanced support to suitably manage the forest, which was a great way to engage the community in the school's work.

In the process of all of her community-focused activities, Stella formed a relationship with the University of Siena's ESD department. Their collaboration has led to even more fruitful results, including a panel for local school students on the topic: "Transforming Education for Mission 4.7".

Being a Global Schools Advocate has reinforced Stella's identity and feeling of belonging amongst a group of multicultural, talented educators. Through all her work, Stella has noticed that her students have become aware of the present challenges they must tackle as future citizens and learned fundamental skills including systems thinking and strategic thinking to solve problems. Stella added that,

"The students are more motivated and active when they are encouraged to take part in cooperative learning activities, to explore local resources, and when they are empowered to show their abilities during events and celebrations. This is especially true when they act."





Silvia

"Take it day-by-day, and do what you can, little-by-little. Start with one link or one book for a storytelling session. Don't feel pressured to do everything at once or a big school-wide project. It's easier when you take it one step at a time, learning for yourself and for others."

A Visit From the Mayor

During her journey as an Advocate, Silvia Yubitza Moreno Carlin was a third- and fourth-grade class teacher at the International School of Leuven in Belgium following the UK Curriculum and the International Primary Curriculum. She had always been passionate about sustainability and was looking for a way to fully integrate sustainable development into her teaching and break down this concept for young students. The Global Schools training facilitated this process for Silvia, making it easier to make connections between SDGs in every subject she taught.

The training course and the official Advocate title gave Silvia a better platform and more confidence to inspire others in her school and fully promote ESD. Silvia started her advocacy work by carrying out an ESD presentation for all nine members of the staff. During the session she shared practical tips, ideas, and suggestions for activities. Silvia also showed examples of how she carried out those activities with her students and provided examples of how to link ESD across all subjects and different ages. She shared resources for her colleagues, and they finished by brainstorming activities for to apply in their classrooms. In total, Silvia carried out activities engaging 59 parents and community members, as well as 50 students.



Silvia is most proud of building a local connection with the community and her school. They started building this connection by having the students in Silvia's class [write letters to the Mayor of Leuven](#). The Mayor responded and congratulated Silvia for her work and came to her class to speak to the students. Her school was eager to invite the mayor to visit, and Silvia's work made the visit meaningful for her school community. Through this connection, the school discovered other SDG initiatives in the city and gained access to special funding to make the school even more sustainable.

Silvia's school is located on a university campus, so one of the main projects Silvia carried out was a march with her students. Her primary students marched around the campus in honor of the global climate strike, getting more people involved. The university-level students were extremely impressed with their actions.

Silvia notes, "Sometimes, I feel people underestimate children. We feel like they won't be able to understand complex topics, but the key is knowing how to adapt. It's so incredible how [my] students become experts, inspiring their families and other adults."

Overall, Silvia noted an increase in students' engagement in lessons, which also led to a rise in student academic achievement, ownership, and responsibility for their learning. Teachers are now exchanging ideas on ESD, and parents are also getting involved by making changes at home and adopting more sustainable habits.

The biggest difference Silvia has noticed in the school is that, overall, educators are making more connections between learning and real life. She says,

"This makes all the lessons more meaningful, and as a result, students commit and engage with the task and lessons much more readily and actively. It's impressive and beautiful to witness that change and how, in the end, [students] end up becoming real changemakers, no matter how young they are!"



North America





Amanda

“Don’t try to fit a square peg into a round hole: see where ESD and the SDGs naturally fit into the existing curriculum...and find like-minded staff to create a movement in your school, including custodians and educational assistants.”

Creating School-Wide Cultural Shifts Through ESD

Amanda Tétrault is the International Baccalaureate (IB) Coordinator at École River Heights School, which encompasses seventh- and eighth-grades. École River Heights School had a prior focus on sustainable development before Amanda became a Global Schools Advocate. She had already completed her Master’s in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and her school administration was supportive of her role, giving her the time she needed to deepen the work that was already happening in her school community with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As part of her work in the school, Amanda incorporated SDGs into the eighth-grade International Baccalaureate (IB) community projects. Amanda created a site where students could click on the SDGs in order to “choose their own adventure”. This would take them to another set of pictures – such as their city, or people lacking water – and would finally lead students to an NGO working on that issue. More than 250 students engaged in this project, and were able to successfully connect their eighth-grade IB community projects to the SDGs. Amanda states that the community project was a huge accomplishment, as it was a lot of work getting all

the teachers involved and on the same page, as well as following up to ensure project success.

One new initiative that started under the Advocates Program was the Team 17 Club. Team 17 is a student-led club with the vision to make a difference in the world.



Team 17 going to shovel for school neighbors

Team 17 hosted an event to encourage active transportation



As one of their initiatives, students created blue and yellow ribbons to represent Ukraine and raised \$1300 in funds, which was then doubled by the Canadian Red Cross.

A member of the Canadian Parliament, Honorable Jim Carr, came to the school, and the students had the chance to carry out constructive dialogue on issues happening around the world. Amanda says, “What other 12-year-old has opportunities like these to really create change?”



In addition, the school received a grant from the local province to create a climate action unit for middle schoolers. During this two-year project, the school will design a French and English curriculum that will be piloted in their school and hopefully expanded in the future; the educators leading the project will design innovative activities and content, and they are working with other NGOs in the community, [Climate Change Connection](#), and [Green Action Centre](#). Amanda shares that the province's science curriculum hasn't been updated since 2000, and she's hoping that their work will feed into the review of the new science curriculum

scheduled to take place in a few years.

Amanda states that this project also reflects the elements of change in the school community:

We have nine teachers involved in this [curriculum] project. Every single science teacher is involved, and I don't think we would have had that before.

Additionally, her school received a grant to buy a tower garden, to incorporate aeroponics into science units. The garden helped students analyze agriculture and water use during their science activities.



Once Amanda became an Advocate, the school began integrating SDGs into existing projects as well as new ones. The drama department, and teacher Kyle Collins, previously spearheaded the “[My Hands](#)” Initiative, however, this year Kyle incorporated the SDGs. Some 220 students selected an SDG and created a speech covering their personal feelings, knowledge, and action points for the goals. They engaged in an extensive revision process to include descriptive language and metaphors, finally developing movements to complement their individual story. Each student chose to tell their story differently through visual monologues to inspire leaders around the world and in their local communities.

This cross-curricular project blended performance arts, social studies, and language arts. Amanda shares, “We had done the project ‘My Hands’ many times, but not with an SDG focus. Instead of kids talking about soccer, they were able to bring in a really rich and deep understanding of the SDGs.”

Amanda’s advice to other teachers is to work with the administration and bring them on board, because support from the top is essential. However, this doesn’t diminish the importance of grassroots support within the community. A big point of change Amanda noticed throughout her time as an Advocate was;

“We really changed the culture of the school. Now, it’s not just me pushing [sustainable development]; it’s a grassroots movement.”

Tips by Idioms:

- Don’t try to fit a square peg into a round hole: See where ESD and the SDGs naturally fit into the existing curriculum. It can easily be integrated in Math or English Language Arts; but also, depending on the outcomes, science, social studies, drama, music, physical education, and health.
- Don’t try to reinvent the wheel: there are so many incredible resources out there that have already been created, just find ones that work and tweak it to your specific student population.
- From the acorn grows the mighty oak: find like-minded staff to create a movement in your school, including Custodians and Educational Assistants.



Sharon

"I think for young children to begin to understand what the goals are, they have to interact with them. And there are so many things in our everyday life, and there are so many things as a teacher that we do naturally that engage with the Global Goals."

SDGs for the Early Years

Sharon Davidson became an Advocate just before retiring as a kindergarten teacher in Vermont, United States, although she has incorporated sustainable development projects using the Global Goals throughout her teaching career. She taught at the Allen Brook School in Williston, Vermont, part of the Champlain Valley School District. From carrying out workshops on WhatsApp, to speaking at conferences, she is constantly promoting sustainable development.

Sharon uses an inquiry-based approach to first introduce kindergarten students to the Global Goals. With a globe in her hands, she asks the students: "What do you think this is?" and they say, "That's the world." She asks them, "Who do you think takes care of the world?" and the students are often puzzled by the question.

From there, Sharon connects the question to her students' personal lives by asking them to think about who takes care of them when they're sick. This leads to great discussions and ideas, which she records for students on a poster.

Then, she brings in her original question, "Who takes care of the world?" and the students answer "We do!"



Finally, she brings in a conversation about superheroes, who are solution-seekers. She puts a blanket around the globe, and shares with the students that the blanket represents all of the Global Goals. Then she says that the Global Goals are like a blanket, and they help care for the world.

She tells the students they will look at three goals just by sorting trash after snack time, which always piques their interest.



Sharon and her students use a map all year long. When they talk about topics such as apples or caterpillars, the students are encouraged to think about which SDGs these connect to, posting them on the map.



She says, “This way, the children have an opportunity to visualize how their learning connects to other places in the world. Apples and caterpillars are found in other places besides Vermont. It is a nice way to begin to introduce geography in a playful way as well as build an awareness of the world.” The map also allows Sharon to bring in fiction and non-fiction, and complete exercises such as comparing and contrasting when doing reading and writing.



In another example, Sharon also connected with a teacher in Ghana through Empatico. Their classrooms participated in a video call, using it as an opportunity for her students to observe examples of classrooms and students in different parts of the world.

After the call, Sharon asked her students, “What did you notice?”. One of her students answered, “They didn’t interrupt.” Sharon was then able to

lead a discussion on empathy, respect, and SDG 4: Quality Education.

During the call, Sharon’s students noticed that the classroom in Ghana only had one computer, and they had asked their peers in Ghana how many books they had. This led to a four-day student-led book drive, where Sharon’s students collected books and art supplies that were sent to the classroom overseas.

Afterward, Sharon was able to help her students reflect on the process of having an idea, a plan, and an action. The entire project helped Sharon’s students imagine life in another person’s shoes while helping them think about being grateful for their own items and their responsibility to take care of the world.

Her work also extends to community engagement with NGOs and parents. One set of parents made a documentary about Antarctica with their daughter. They wrote Sharon a letter saying they’re so grateful for the Global Goals. Instead of buying gifts for Sharon, the parents are donating money to charities or buying trees in Brazil. Parents are raising awareness and thinking more globally about what they can do and what they have. As she comes to the end of her teaching career, she says:



The work that the Global Schools Program is doing is extremely important, and I’m sad that I’m not in the classroom anymore. But the work [on the Global Goals] is so enriching and igniting. I feel hopeful, and I hope more educators will give it a try. You can see the value.





Mubeen

"It is important to build the teacher community into one voice in a school and create a mission around building SDGs into teaching and learning."

Building a Common Mission with Staff Across Curriculum

Mubeen carried out her initial Advocate mandate at Ibn Khuldoon National School in Bahrain, but this year, she moved to Canada to work in SenPaq'Cin School, an IB World School, which encompasses learners from ages 2-13. The school is a first nation school, whose overall mission is to incorporate local culture and use history as a mechanism of exchange. Approximately 60% of the students in the school are first-nation students. The school provides ample extracurricular opportunities, including after-school programs, clubs, and learning support; this gave Mubeen space to integrate sustainable development into teaching and learning via curriculum mapping, whole-of-school events, and partnerships.

First, Mubeen began her work with curriculum mapping. Together with other educators, they started with connecting an ongoing unit to Global Goals at the micro level, as well as additionally relating concepts to the unit that promote ESD. For example, in first-grade, her team started by looking at their current unit, "Rules, Regulations, and Routines." They found the most relevant and related SDG, drawing upon local and tangible examples from their community for the students to investigate.



Second, Mubeen successfully worked with staff to map the Global Goals into a series of locally relevant, whole-of-school cultural events. Mubeen uses a cultural calendar for the school that was established by the Cultural Team Lead. The school links each event with an SDG to make it more tangible for students, connecting the goal to the broader world. One of the local cultural days, The Salmon Feast, revolves around fish which Mubeen was able to connect to SDG 14: Life Below Water. On this day, the school discusses sustainable fishing, how the local community makes salmon available to all, and the future of fishing. All of this is approached from multiple perspectives, thinking about supporting humans and protecting the environment.

Thirdly, Mubeen is establishing partnerships with schools across the globe that are learning the same topics; these schools have also mapped their curriculum to SDGs. For example, in fifth through seventh-grades, her students are learning about economic disparities in relation to conflict. Students have connected to other classrooms in Japan, Congo, Iran, and India to discuss how schools and NGOs receive economic support. “Virtual learning is a great platform that helps students understand the problems of the world,” shares Mubeen. “When discussing economic disparities, we can connect this to big concepts such as conflict. Or we can see locally how we can help the homeless population this winter.”

The school also incorporates local language instruction. Mubeen’s next steps involve working more with the SDGs in the native language of the local population, the Okanagan language (nqlixwcn). So far, the school has successfully translated the SDGs into this language.

The students across the school have already taken up the mandate to conduct local advocacy activities to support their communities. A sixth-grade student chose to integrate SDG 15: Life on Land during her IB Primary Years Program (PYP) project, and after months of research, interviews, and surveys, [the government agreed to install more horse crossing signs](#) in Oliver, British Columbia.

Finally, to ensure buy-in and coordination across the school, Mubeen engages the teachers through individual conversations, rather than school-wide professional development specifically on SDGs. She has one hour of weekly collaboration time with each teacher, and she sets aside 15 minutes of this time to discuss sustainable development and curriculum development that focuses on ESD.



SDG 4, Translated into nqlixwcn



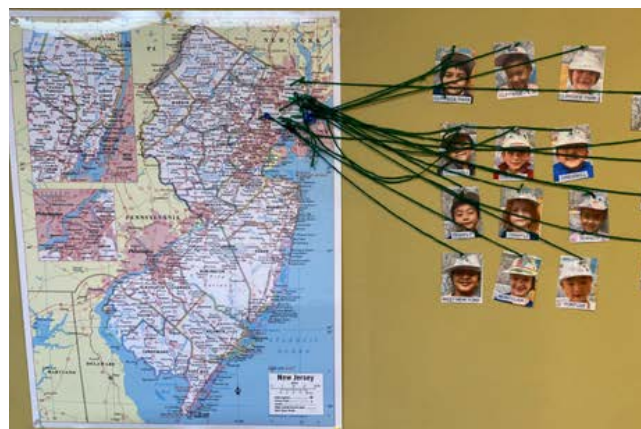
Jacklyn

"It is critical to lead with love and passion for what you are doing. You will always find people that want to join forces and work with you if you radiate love and light around these things; everyone will want to move the work forward, and you'll achieve powerful results."

Teaching ESD to Students and Teachers

Jacklyn Beck was drawn to the Advocates program because of her interest in the SDG framework. Jacklyn Beck is an Educational Specialist and Instructional Coach at the Elisabeth Morrow School, for preschool through 8th-grade learners. She had used the SDGs before and her interest to scale up this work led her to become a Global Schools Advocate. When she began her Advocate mandate, she was excited by all the resources provided and started to think about how to pair them down, integrate ESD into her school, and make it interdisciplinary.

First, Jacklyn offered teachers the opportunity to learn about SDGs and ESD in more detail. At the time, there were many new initiatives on teaching and learning under a brand new school leader, so Jacklyn did not make her workshop on ESD curriculum analysis and professional development mandatory; if educators wanted to join, they would be included. To her surprise, she had a huge turnout at her first meeting; educators were ready to learn, interested, and motivated. She believes this was because she posed the ESD professional development session as an open invitation, rather than a requirement.



During the first year of her mandate (2021-2022), the momentum was slow, but in the next year (2022-2023), Jacklyn worked with a new group of educators on professional development for ESD. In summary, the school has been using the project-based learning (PBL) works Gold Standard Framework to make PBL formal in the school. This gives teachers [a shared rubric, language, and design plan](#). Jacklyn believes PBL and the SDGs go hand and hand and that the school is not only infusing ESD, but also moving toward a style of teaching that is proven to be more impactful than traditional methods.

One of the new initiatives Jacklyn started as an Advocate was [the student capstone project for eighth-graders](#). The project is rooted in the SDGs, specifically, equity, justice, and sustainability, as well as important competencies students should have as activists, engagers, and leaders. Together with educators in her school, Jacklyn worked on the conception and development of the capstone project proposals for the students. Students were guided through the process: 1. What is a Capstone? 2. What is meaningful to work on? This led to an SDG discussion as the students move forward with the capstones. This school year (Sept 2022-June 2023) was the first time it was implemented. The middle school director and three educators have supported the project and taken it on.

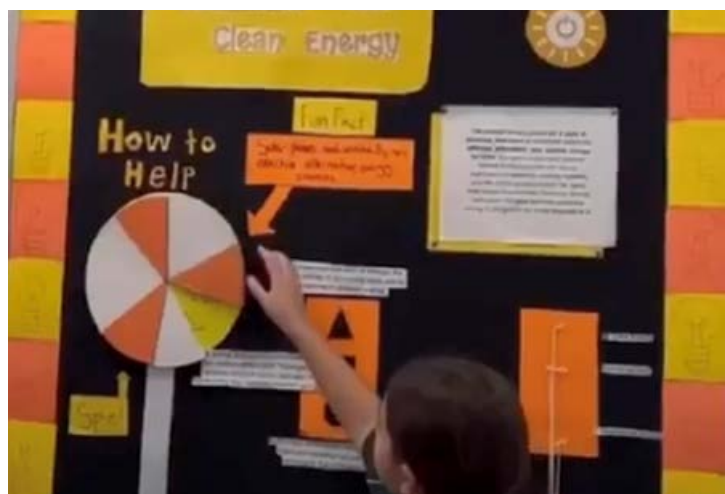
She shares,

"A lot is new, but I do acknowledge incredible things were happening before. My role is to help generate new ideas by providing opportunities to connect with the SDGs, creating a more integrated approach to teaching."



Jacklyn shares that the biggest challenge is the battle for time. Educators are tasked with so many things to teach, from academic content to socio-emotional considerations post-COVID, that it is hard to find time for the SDGs and ESD. For her school, children returned post-pandemic with varying levels of traumatic experiences – some students were not impacted at all and some devastatingly impacted – and this was a priority for the school and educators.

She shares that this year the educators are more hopeful and focused on ESD and PBL, with the main priority areas being ESD as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).



Lessons Learned

Lessons learned showed that the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact educators ability to engage with students in person. Educators had to adapt to ever changing COVID-19 policies and change their lesson plans to reflect the new regulations. Additionally, educators reported that due to online learning it has become increasingly difficult to monitor the results of their work and any behavior changes in their colleagues and students.

Extra-Curricular Engagement

Lessons learned showed the importance of having school leadership that was supportive of sustainable development ideas. Numerous Global Schools Advocates pointed out that having supportive school leadership was critical for them to build momentum within the school and create more successful engagement with other teachers, students, and parents. Advocates that work at schools that were slower to bring in new ideas, had to be creative in how they brought the SDGs into their own classrooms.

Utilizing Resources on Sustainable Development

Many Advocates mentioned the importance of busy schedules that can act as impediments to teachers taking on new activities related to the SDGs. However, many also shared insights that teachers should look where they can tie in the SDGs to their current curriculum, lessons, and activities before trying to add new materials and increase their workload. Global Schools Advocates mentioned that a barrier to increasing engagement with their colleagues was busy schedules and teachers being hesitant about adding more work. However, in general, the Advocates were able to lead their students and colleagues on their journeys to working with the SDGs.

Interdisciplinary Nature of SDGs

Global Schools Advocates work in varying subject areas, from English to Science and even pre-primary learning, and have learned that the SDGs can be connected to numerous different subjects. Advocates found ways to connect to the SDGs in their respective classrooms in ways not previously thought of, especially in more unconventional subject areas.

Supportive Leadership

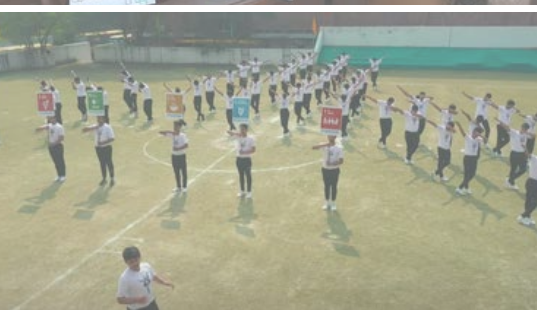
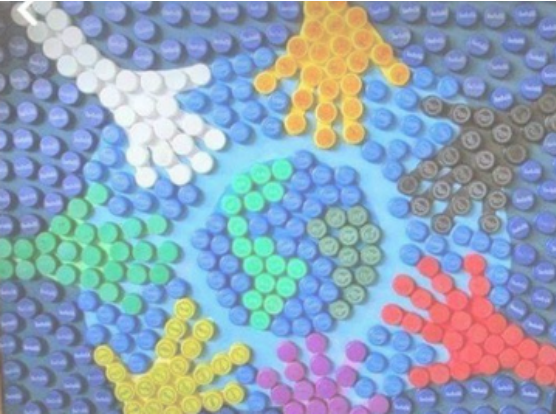
Lessons learned that many Advocates were able to engage their students in new clubs related to the SDGs. Students are able to learn and work on SDG material outside of the classroom and expand their knowledge and understanding. However, time constraints and numerous other factors make implementing a new club difficult for all Advocates to achieve.

Time Constraints

The Advocates expressed that the Global Schools resources (Toolkit, lesson plans and/or training course) were beneficial resources to start incorporating sustainable development into lessons and activities. Some Advocates were then able to adapt these resources to fit their school based on their experiences.

Quantifying Results of Student Engagement

Lessons learned showed that students in numerous schools increased ownership of their learning, responsibility, and engagement in school activities. Advocates shared numerous tangible benefits the students experienced. However, as a result of extenuating circumstances, it was difficult to measure exact changes in student behaviors and outcomes. It is necessary for future projects to measure the impact of ESD on students.



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