

Chapter 16

Involving Diverse Stakeholders for Sustainable Development: Some Learning Experiences From Across Poland

Jan Dobrowolski

*AGH University of Science and
Technology, Poland*

Aleksandra L. Wagner

*AGH University of Science and
Technology, Poland*

Justyna Kobylarczyk

*Cracow University of Technology (PK),
Poland*

Robert Mazur

*AGH University of Science and
Technology, Poland*

ABSTRACT

The rich pool of tacit knowledge in the minds of a diverse set of stakeholders is a crucial asset for exploring the solutions of Sustainable Development. The education for Sustainable Development can therefore be carried out as an interactive exercise between the stakeholders rather than a one-way flow of knowledge in the conventional class rooms. It calls for paradigmatically new ways of education for addressing the issues of Sustainable Development. The generating of knowledge, its dissemination and devising solutions for Sustainable Development have to go hand in hand. With this perspective in mind the Polish scholars focused on organising workshops for the stakeholders of diverse backgrounds for synthesising, documenting and further devising solutions for Sustainable Development on the basis of their knowledge. Some activities were also focused on social participation which included the residents of the analysed areas.

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BACKGROUND

Educational systems have an obviously important role to play in knowledge driven societies; unlike the 20th century societies where education was largely confined to a specific age bracket and with set patterns of delivery, the contemporary world has developed requirements of lifelong education innovative teaching-learning methods and delivery mechanisms and processes. Knowledge is required not just to earn a livelihood but is crucially linked to the entire issue of Sustainable Development. There are emerging requirements of education at various age groups which need to be responded by the extant educational systems; national governments are therefore confronted with the obligation of democratising education and making it more and more development oriented. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of United Nations have placed renewed emphasis on the role of knowledge for Sustainable Development by propagating the idea that national governments should ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG-4).

There has been an increased realisation across the world that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations cannot be addressed as long as there is an dearth of awareness about the intricacies of Sustainable Development at various levels. People from all walks of life need to be prepared to fulfil such capacity building requirements. Education systems have a crucial responsibility to connect with the people proactively, build up their capacities and thereby addressing the concerns of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The conventional systems of education, which are largely based on face-to-face systems of education, cannot serve this purpose. Rather, there are needs of using multiple channels for making it convenient to the learners and also creating scope for accommodating the popular knowledge bases.

In order to overcome this gap it is required that flexible and innovative capacity building systems, which can respond to the workplace requirements and preferences of the people, are brought into place. The conventional systems of education, due to their rigid structures, are inherently not capable to reach out to the people in real life settings and adjust with their conveniences. This is the reason why “Open and Distance Learning” systems, which have immense potential to respond to the capacity building requirements of people, are gaining prominence across the world. The rapidly aging Polish society is developing pressing demand for alternative systems of education. As more number of people belong to higher age brackets the need for distance education is a developmental imperative; the knowledge created by the Universities has to continuously flow to the people who need it at their workplaces

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