



US PARTNERSHIP

DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
UNITED NATIONS DECADE (2005-2014)

Vision of the U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development:
Sustainable development integrated into education and learning in the United States

Mission of the U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development:
Leverage the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005 through 2014, (Decade) to foster education for sustainable development¹ (ESD) in the United States

The **U.S. Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development** (The Partnership) continues to support its vision and its mission through convening people, catalyzing initiatives, and communicating successes, precedents and resources. These activities are building community and national support for ESD. **The Partnership currently has approximately 367 registered partner organizations, including many mainstream organizations newly engaged in sustainable development as well as emerging leaders and well-known sustainability experts.**

The Partnership works primarily through five societal Sector Teams. The Partnership's current Sector Teams are: Communities; Business; Faith Based Organizations; Higher Education; and K-12 (Kindergarten through 12th grade education). The Sector Teams have compiled ESD tools and resources and worked together to advance ESD through dozens of initiatives catalyzed by the U.S. Partnership. The Partnership provides international and national context for these initiatives, helping to promote and strengthen education for sustainable development in the United States. **Updates from several of our Teams are highlighted below.**

Higher Education Sector

The Partnership founded the **Disciplinary Associations Network for Sustainability (DANS)** (www.asshe.org/dans), an informal network of over twenty academic professional organizations working on sustainability curricula for all students; professional development for faculty and professional members; educating the public about sustainability; textbook revisions to include sustainability education; standards and tenure requirements to reward prioritizing educating for sustainability literacy and engagement in solutions; legislative briefings on what higher education can bring to sustainability related policies; and cross disciplinary projects on education for sustainability.

In addition to DANS, The Partnership was instrumental in starting the **Higher Education Associations for Sustainability Consortium (HEASC)** (www.heasc.net), a network of higher education associations with a commitment to advancing sustainability within their constituencies and within the system of higher education itself. This network includes the professional associations for college and university presidents, business officers, facilities directors, student activities and housing staff, procurement officers, and planners.

The Higher Education Sector Team has also lent its support to the advancement of the following national initiatives:

- The **Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)** (www.aashe.org), an informational network and association of colleges and universities, throughout the U.S. and Canada, working to create a sustainable future through training and educating future leaders, scholars, workers and professionals.
- The **American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC)** (www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org), a high-visibility effort to address global climate change by garnering institutional commitments to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions and to accelerate the research and educational efforts of higher education to equip society to re-stabilize the earth's climate.

¹ "Sustainable Development" has been defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (Brundtland Commission, 1987). "Education for Sustainable Development" encompasses all forms of learning – formal and informal – that help achieve the "triple bottom line" of healthy environments, thriving economies, and just societies.

K-12 and Teacher Education Sector

With input from K-12 educators in public, private and pre-service fields nationally, The Partnership's **K-12 and Teacher Education Sector developed the first set of National Education for Sustainability K-12 Standards**. The standards define what K-12 students should know and be able to do to be "sustainability literate." To view these standards, visit the U.S. Partnerships website at (http://www.uspartnership.org/resources/0000/0062/USPEfSSStandards_V2.09.08.pdf).

The **K-12 and Teacher Education Sector convened a summit for national K-12 organizations entitled Education for Sustainability National Professional Organizations Summit** in Washington, D.C. The summit's purpose was to educate and engage members of national professional education organizations in the goals and applicability of Education for Sustainability. Over 25 professional education organizations were represented at the summit. **The K-12 and Teacher Education Sector has convened national conference calls and catalyzed initiatives with members of the professional organizations represented at the summit** with great success. Publications, webinars, and public statements of commitment to sustainability education from K-12 national organizations are some of the outcomes.

The first, **national K-12 education for sustainability listserv was launched** to enable K-12 educators to collaborate on strategies to integrate education for sustainability into the teaching and operations of K-12 schools.

Community Sector

The Partnership's **Community Sector has developed a "sustainable community" resource library** for communities, available on the U.S. Partnerships website (http://www.uspartnership.org/main/show_passage/51).

Business Sector

The Business Sector has developed a list of resources and has issued the following statement encouraging more ESD.

To meet the immense challenges of the present and the future, it is important that all undergraduate and graduate college students learn about our environmental and social sustainability challenges and be provided with learning opportunities that engage them in solutions to these challenges. We live in a unique time, where the decisions of this generation may very well dictate the health of the planet for this and future generations. The impacts of these decisions will affect the quality of life across the globe. All students need to learn, through an interdisciplinary approach, not only the specifics of our sustainability challenges and the possible solutions, but also the interpersonal skills, the systems thinking skills, and the change agent skills to effectively help to create a more sustainable future. We are looking for these sustainability educated students as future business people, as employees, as consumers, innovators, government leaders and investors. We would like to see this be a requirement for all students.

Youth Action Team

The **Youth Action Team is responsible for the development of "Sustaining Leaders", an intergenerational mentoring project**. This program aims to increase learning between young leaders in the climate change movement and experienced professionals – advancing a key element of education for sustainable development. In addition to supporting and catalyzing such groups as "Energy Action" and "Sustaining Leaders", **delegates of the Youth Action Team spoke at "Climate Change: Science & Solutions", the 8th National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment** sponsored by the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE). This event brought together over 1200 scientists, academics and sustainability activists and was itself a major ESD event. **Youth contributions organized by the Youth Action Team made a significant contribution**. The Youth Action Team continues to collaborate with youth leaders and youth organizations across the country to shift societal norms to sustainability education for all.

Faith Sector Team

The **Faith Sector team** is planning a meeting of faith leaders in New York in May to discuss the potential interest in a mid-decade ESD exchange event for the Sector. The team continues to update its resources page (http://www.uspartnership.org/main/show_passage/52) with recent news and web-links highlighting faith inspired ESD activities across the country. Peter Adriance, Chair of the Faith Sector team is giving a keynote address on ESD and Faith Communities at the annual banquet of the Multifaith Council of Toledo Ohio. A regional ESD initiative launched by the Partnership in 2007 in collaboration with several faith communities in southern Maine continues to hold monthly activities in that region.