**Thematic Issue Proposal Form**

**Date of Proposal:** 29 May 2024

**Name of Thematic Issue:**

*Education, sustainability and social justice: lessons for capability development from the Global South*

**Lead Editors’ Names and Contact Info:**

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**Description of Theme:**

**Education, sustainability and social justice: lessons for capability development from the Global South**

The climate crisis is a significant global challenge. While the issues take a strongly environmental orientation, sustainability is also intricately tied up with social, economic and political factors, and has significant implications for intergenerational justice (Brundtland, 1987). Challenges of sustainability are asymmetrical as the impacts of power, wealth and consumption on sustainable futures are unequally distributed. Moreover, these effects are deeply historically rooted. Wealthy, Global North nations have been major contributors to the harmful effects of climate change, while poorer Global South countries, with lower cumulative historical emissions and lower present-day income suffer the largest losses (Kotz, et al., 2024). In these regions, climate change disproportionately affects poor and marginalised communities, threatening the lives and livelihoods of millions, and exacerbating existing crises of poverty, malnourishment, joblessness and inequality (Shepard, 2019). Climate change needs to be tackled in tandem with inequality reduction, paying attention to the intricate links between them (Guivarch et al., 2021).

The role of education in sustainability has become all the more urgent. In 2021, the Report from the International Commission on the Futures of Education called for a new social compact with education to re-imagine a more sustainable future for humans and the planet (UNESCO, 2021). It is a pressing call to action in response to the increasing precarity of life and the planet. It is also a call to recognise the power of education in bringing about change. Research in education is fundamental to addressing the challenges that are emerging around the world. Knowledge development and innovation for advancing technologies have the potential to respond to the damaging impacts and promote more sustainable ways of being and doing. Agency, belonging, and capabilities for resilience, regeneration and solidarity can enable individuals and communities to build towards more sustainable futures. Higher education institutions particularly have potential as ‘transformational agents’ (Žalėnienė & Pereira, 2021), such as in the integration and dissemination of the SDGs through transformative teaching and learning, impactful research, meaningful community engagement, and in the development of future leaders and change agents in society.

This special issue aims to explore and expand the role of education (across all levels and types) in sustainability, and in particular what this means in terms of capability development and social justice. These are issues that have not received much attention in Capabilitarian scholarship. Reinforcing our commitment to human development and social justice, the journal issue is focused on the lessons we can learn in this respect from the Global South.

We take as our starting point the role of education in challenging sources of oppression as a means to freedom (Freire, 1970). In the context of sustainable development, education holds a key role in the SDGs (United Nations, 2016). However, Tikly et al. (2020), argue that for education to effectively drive sustainable development and confront issues of injustice requires transformative change, at system, institution and classroom levels. In this special issue, we are interested in exploring what is happening within education and sustainability, at the system, policy, institutional, pedagogical, and individual levels, to bring about change. Transformative change may empower but also disrupts norms, structures, disciplines and the status quo. Further to the work of Kulundu-Bolus et al. (2020) we are interested to learn 'what it may mean to *transgress* the limits of a neoliberal world and its crisis times in our research and praxis, in the service of a decolonial [and more sustainable] future' (p.112, italics in original). We make a call to educators, scholars and researchers to contribute theoretical, empirical or methodological insights to the debate on education and sustainability within the scholarship of capabilities and human development. The purpose is to explore the role of education, and the way in which capability development is advanced in the interests of greater sustainable human development and planetary justice, whether through institutional or pedagogical arrangements, individually or collectively.

In paying attention to the intricate links between education, sustainability and inequality reduction, we propose that there is also a need to challenge the inequalities in academic publishing, which is dominated by publishers and publications in the Global North who serve as gatekeepers to knowledge production and dissemination. ‘Bibliometric coloniality’ (Mills et al., 2022) is built around Euro-American publishing networks and commercial interests that leave academics in the Global South marginalised, facing constant challenges to their legitimacy and reputation. In the interests of creating more inclusive, credible and sustainable academic publication practices, this special issue prioritises scholarship from the Global South, as a particular context that includes a history of colonisation and persistent inequalities that are reproduced in social, economic, environmental and academic spaces. The special issue acknowledges that the global academy has much to learn from the work and perspectives of scholars working in vulnerable and marginalised contexts, and which could contribute towards more sustainable and equitable ways of knowing, being and doing.

Our definition of the Global South is aligned with literatures around academic and publishing marginalisation, and includes the regions of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia and Oceania, which have been identified to be disadvantaged by or missing from leading American, British and European academic journals (Confraria et al., 2016; Medie & Kang, 2018). This acknowledges contemporary systems of hegemony and the historical entanglements that shape knowledge formation (Takayama et al., 2017). Eligibility for publication in the special issue requires corresponding authors to be domiciled in the Global South and conducting their research in a Global South institution. Corresponding authors may choose to collaborate with authors from the Global South or North, as they wish. Submissions may be made in Spanish or French, in addition to English. Any questions regarding eligibility should be directed to the editorial team.

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**Topics:**

We welcome papers that will seek to:

* Critically analyse the ways in which we understand education for sustainability
* Understand the role of education in fostering capability development for sustainable and socially just futures.
* Explore pedagogical processes for agency development and transformative learning in the context of the climate crisis
* Present decolonial approaches to education for sustainability
* Assess how national and/or international policy impacts learning for sustainability in the Global South context.
* Use participatory methods in researching education and sustainability

**Editorial Team:**

* Dr. Sarah Ward (Education TG Coordinator), Lecturer in Learning in Communities, University of Edinburgh, Scotland
* Dr. Fenella Somerville (Education TG member), Postdoctoral Research Fellow, HEHD Research Programme University of the Free State, South Africa
* Dr. Patience Nyamunda (Education TG Coordinator), Lecturer in Education, University of Glasgow, Scotland
* Dr. Petya Ilieva-Trichkova, Assistant Professor, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Sofia, Bulgaria

**Editors Ad hoc (for specialised submissions):**

* **Policy:** Dr. Laksh Venkataraman, (Education TG Coordinator/), Associate Professor, Department of Liberal Arts, MIT World Peace University, Pune, India
* **Spanish Language:** Dr. Pablo Del Monte, Lecturer in Education, University of Waikato, Te Kura Toi Tangata School of Education Operations, New Zealand
* **French Language:** This will be overseen by a French-speaking member of the JHDC Editorial Board

**Authors:**

**Note for potential contributors**

* Corresponding authors must be working at Global South institutions and domiciled in the Global South, with a Global South research focus.
* Additional authors are included at the discretion of the corresponding author.
* We encourage submissions from scholars will present papers at the HDCA Conference 2024.

**Proposed process and timeline:**

* Call for papers: 28th May 2024
* Abstract submission deadline: 28 July 2024
* Notification of abstract acceptance: 22 August 2024
* Final papers due: 30 December 2024
* Peer review/Selection of papers: 30 August 2025
* Publication of issue: November 2025