

# **ESD in Lifelong Learning**

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**Education for sustainable development (ESD)**  
**is an approach to education that supports students**  
**to develop the skills and competences they will need**  
**to promote a more sustainable future, regardless of**  
**their discipline of study and future profession**

**Education for sustainable development (ESD) gives learners of all ages the knowledge, skills, values, and agency to address interconnected global challenges including climate change, loss of biodiversity, unsustainable use of resources, and inequality. It empowers learners of all ages to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action to change society and care for the planet.(Unesco ,2024)**

ESD is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education. It enhances the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself.(Unesco,2024)

- On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the universal, integrated and transformative **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, along with a set of **17 SDGs** and 169 associated targets.

- **SDG 4: Quality Education**

- **Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

- **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**

- **Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.**



Lifelong Learning as an  
**'Approach'**

Incheon Declaration describes a  
lifelong learning approach

Lifelong Learning as an  
**'Opportunities'**

SDG 4 refers to lifelong learning  
opportunities throughout life

**and**

**Policies ?**



## LLL as a core policy framework

- Many Southeast Asian countries have integrated LLL into their national development plans and educational policies. This is in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and LLL for all.
- Organizations like UNESCO, ASEAN, and SEAMEO are actively promoting and supporting these efforts through policy reviews, workshops, and knowledge sharing platforms.
- A key aspect is moving beyond traditional, formal education (schools and universities) to include non-formal and informal learning, such as vocational training, community workshops, and digital learning.

## Implementation at the local level (Learning Cities)

- Cities like Bangkok, Hat Yai, and Petaling Jaya are concrete examples of this strategy in action.
- The strategy is to make the entire city a "campus" where learning is integrated into daily life. This includes using public spaces, libraries, and community centers for learning.
- The focus is on practical, real-world skills. For example, Hat Yai's workshops on disaster risk reduction and recycling are a direct application of LLL for climate resilience.

## Role of Technology

- Digital and mobile technologies are a critical part of the LLL strategy. They help overcome geographical barriers and provide access to learning materials for remote and vulnerable populations.
- Online platforms, blended learning courses, and digital literacy training are being used to support this.

## Strengthening Collaboration and Networks

- The strategy relies heavily on multi-stakeholder partnerships. This includes collaborations between governments, educational institutions, the private sector, and civil society.
- Networks like the ASEAN Climate Resilience Network (ASEAN-CRN) and UNESCO's GNLC are essential for knowledge exchange and capacity building. They allow countries to learn from each other's successes and challenges.

**"It is about equipping every citizen--from children to informal laborers—with the knowledge and skills needed for climate resilience and community development. In the context of this presentation, it likely focuses on how individuals and communities can continuously learn and adapt to changing environmental conditions."**

- At the highest level, **LLL is a strategic component of national and regional development policies.**
- Governments and regional bodies are integrating LLL into their frameworks, recognizing that continuous learning is essential for economic competitiveness and social resilience.
- **Holistic Integration:** This strategy goes beyond formal schooling.
  - It involves creating a learning ecosystem that includes non-formal education (e.g., vocational training centers, community workshops) and informal learning (e.g., on-the-job training, self-directed learning). This is key for a region with diverse economies and a large informal workforce.
- **Political Will:** The commitment from education ministers and national leaders, as seen in regional conferences and policy dialogues, demonstrates the political will to make LLL a key principle.

This top-down support is crucial for securing long-term funding and institutional backing for LLL programs.

- This is where the LLL strategy becomes a powerful tool for on-the-ground action. Instead of a one-time educational campaign, it is about **building a continuous capacity for communities to adapt and respond to new challenges.**

- **Context-Specific Skills:** The strategy focuses on equipping individuals with practical skills for climate resilience.

For example, in flood-prone areas, this could involve training on disaster preparedness and early warning systems. In agricultural communities, it might mean learning new, climate-resilient farming techniques. This approach directly addresses the challenge of creating culturally sensitive metrics for measuring success.

**Leveraging Traditional Knowledge: A key part of the regional strategy is to not just import new knowledge but to also integrate and build upon "local wisdom" and traditional knowledge.**

**For instance, ancestral practices for water management or disaster mitigation are being recognized and strengthened through LLL programs.**

**Youth as Agents of Change: The strategy recognizes the critical role of young people.**

**Programs are designed to empower them to be "climate champions" who can drive change within their schools and communities.**

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- The strategic implementation of LLL is heavily dependent on collaboration and knowledge sharing.
    - **Regional Collaboration:** Networks such as the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) and PASCAL LCN are crucial platforms. They enable cities to share successful practices and assessment methods.
    - **Multi-stakeholder Partnerships:** The strategy relies on building partnership between various actors—universities, the private sector, and civil society organizations.
      - For example, private companies might partner with learning centers to offer skills training that is directly relevant to the job market.
    - **Data-Driven Decisions:** As highlighted in your slides, the strategy aims to use data to measure the impact of LLL programs.
      - This helps in proving their value, securing more funding, and refining policies. The use of technology, such as mobile tools for data collection, is a key enabler for this.
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- **Peer assessment leverages the power of social learning and collaboration**

## **How it Works in Practice ?**

- In a LLL program for digital literacy, participants could work in pairs.
- One person teaches the other how to use a new application, and they provide feedback to each other. In a climate resilience context, neighbors can peer-assess each other's home-based disaster preparedness plans.

## **Why it's a Strategic Advantage**

- This approach <sup>?</sup>reinforces social bonds and creates a network of support.
- It moves away from a hierarchical "teacher-student" model and fosters a collaborative learning environment.
- This is especially important in the context of climate resilience, where a community's collective action is a key factor in its ability to withstand and recover from a climate event.

# Formative Assessment: Learning as an Ongoing Process

Unlike traditional, one-off exams, formative assessment is a continuous process of feedback and adjustment. It is a fundamental strategy for LLL.

## How it Works in Practice

- In a community-based LLL program on water management for climate resilience, a facilitator might use formative assessment by asking participants to draw their local water system.
- This helps the facilitator gauge the community's existing knowledge and identify misconceptions. Based on this, they can adjust the training content in real-time.

## Why it's a strategic Advantage

- This approach ensures that learning is truly tailored to the needs of the community. It moves away from a rigid curriculum and makes the learning process dynamic and responsive to local conditions.
- It is a more effective way to build practical skills for climate resilience, which are constantly evolving.

- Self-assessment is a key LLL strategy because it puts the learner in charge of their own progress.
- It is about empowering individuals to take ownership of their learning and growth.

## **How it Works in Practice ?**

- After a workshop on sustainable farming, farmers could be given a simple checklist to assess their own progress.
- For example, "Have I successfully implemented the new composting method? Do I understand the benefits?" This encourages reflection and a sense of responsibility.

## **Why it's a Strategic Advantage**

- This method is <sup>?</sup>crucial for reducing the reliance on external "experts" and building long-term, self-sustaining capacity within communities.
- It fosters a culture of continuous improvement, which is essential for adapting to the long-term effects of climate change. It aligns with the idea of a "learning society" where individuals are empowered to solve their own problems.

## “So, what do we actually measure ?”

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- Here are some practical examples:

**Knowledge and Skills:** Pre- and post-surveys to track understanding of climate risks and mitigation strategies.

**Behavioral Change:** Monitor changes in household energy consumption, waste reduction, or participation in local environmental projects.

**Community Action:** Quantify the number of new community gardens, public workshops, or collaborative local policies on sustainability.

**Economic Resilience:** Track the number of individuals who gain new skills in "green" jobs or sustainable agriculture.

# STRATEGY 1: THE QUANTITATIVE APPROACH (MEASURE THE “WHAT”)

This strategy focuses on using measurable data to assess the impact of learning initiative.

This is about establishing a clear baseline and then tracking progress over time.

## For Climate Resilience

- ▶ **Behavioral Change Metrics:** Track changes in actions. For example, after a workshop on waste management, measure the percentage increase in household recycling or decrease in plastic waste collection in a neighborhood.
- ▶ **Infrastructure Impact:** Assess the effect on a community's physical environment. For a program on urban gardening, measure the number of new community gardens established or the volume of stormwater runoff absorbed by green spaces.

## For Community Development

- ▶ **Economic Indicators:** Measure the economic outcomes of skills-based learning. For example, after a program on micro-business management, track the number of new businesses launched or the average increase in income among participants.
- ▶ **Social Cohesion:** Use metrics like the number of new community groups formed, the attendance rate at community events, or data from social surveys that measure residents' sense of belonging and trust in their neighbors.

# STRATEGY 1: THE QUANTITATIVE APPROACH (MEASURING THE “WHAT”)

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## For Climate Resilience

- ▶ **Knowledge and Preparedness:** Use pre- and post- surveys to measure an increase in community members' knowledge of climate risks, emergency response procedures, or sustainable practices. For a flood-prone city, this could be the percentage of households with a family emergency plan.

## For Community Development

- ▶ **Skills Acquisition:** Track the number of certifications earned, new job placements, or the percentage of participants who report a tangible improvement in a specific skill (e.g., digital literacy).

# STRATEGY 2: THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH (UNDERSTANDING THE "WHY" AND "HOW")

This strategy focuses on collecting narrative and contextual information to understand the deeper impact of learning. It provides the "story" behind the numbers.

## For Climate Resilience

- **Case Studies:** Document detailed stories of how specific individuals or families used their new knowledge to adapt to climate impacts. For example, a case study on a fisherman who learned sustainable fishing techniques after a program on marine conservation.
- **Participatory Assessment:** Engage the community in the assessment process itself. Host focus groups where residents can share their experiences, challenges, and successes in implementing climate-friendly behaviors. This gives the community ownership of the evaluation.

## For Community Development

- **Success Stories:** Collect and share powerful personal stories that highlight how lifelong learning has led to personal growth, increased confidence, or a stronger sense of purpose.
- **Feedback Loops:** Establish a system for continuous feedback, such as suggestion boxes or online forums, where community members can share their ideas and observations about what is working and what could be improved in learning programs.

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## For Climate Resilience

- **Interviews and Anecdotes:** Conduct one-on-one interviews with community leaders and participants to gather rich, narrative feedback on how lifelong learning has changed their perspective on environmental issues and inspired new actions.

## For Community Development

- **Observational Data:** For programs focused on social interaction, use direct observation to assess how participants collaborate, communicate, and solve problems together during a learning activity. This reveals the true depth of social connection being built.

**Lifelong learning directs policy and implementation, it captures the essence of working with and serving all members of society, and herein lie the similarities between the lifelong learning approach and ESD.**

**Lifelong learning and ESd are intrinsically aligned, as demonstrated by comparable levels of multi-stakeholder involvement, cross-sectoral investment of resources, and outcomes. By extension, a lifelong learning approach will inherently lead to ESD.**