



## The university's contributions to achieving sustainable development

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### Abstract

Sustainable development has received great attention in various countries of the world and various sectors, including university institutions, which are increasingly aware of the need to integrate sustainable development into their scientific and practical plans.

This study aims to attempt to clarify the contribution of university institutions and scientific research to achieving the goals of sustainable development.

At the end of the study, it became clear to us that the importance of the university is great and important by contributing to sustainable development, especially as it helps us see science in the present, and from it we build society.

**Keywords:** university education; Development planning; Science; human capital; Labor market.



## .1Introduction:

Humanity must choose and take sustainable development seriously in order to recreate a peaceful, equitable and healthy world for all. Under these circumstances, sustainable development has become the world's main theme, The Sustainable Development Goals, which define a complex series of goals that address global challenges, have become a global implementation plan for governments,<sup>1</sup> public and private institutions and individuals. One of the most important institutions that governments have relied on is the university institution. Quality education plays a central role in achieving the dream of an equal, A healthy and prosperous society through education.<sup>2</sup>

University institutions have come to rely heavily on ensuring human capital in order to participate effectively in economic development, especially in the twentieth century with new governments. which have focused on directing higher education institutions to play an increasing role in the social and economic progress of countries. Moreover, the role of higher education institutions in development has shifted from being creators of knowledge and human capital to institutions tasked with providing and modifying their function and role to include the democratization of education and knowledge, and making education available to all segments of society, which requires increasing openness to society, integrating it and educating it in order to achieve more sustainable development. The university is considered the scientific and academic institution that provides the labor market with specializations and human resources for the requirements of sustainable development in society. From Talcott Parsons' point of view, it is the mother organization of all other organizations. Universities also have many specializations through which they can provide work to achieve sustainable development. They are mostly stable institutions accustomed to planning for long-term visions. They are

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<sup>1</sup> - Aslıhan Güzin Selçuk, The Role of Universities in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: A Case From Turkey, Conference: Fifth International Conference on Natural Resources and Sustainable Environmental ManagementAt: North Cyprus, November 2021

<sup>2</sup> - Symaco, L. P., & Tee, M. Y. (2019). Social responsibility and engagement in higher education: Case of the ASEAN. International Journal of Educational Development, 66, 184-192



ideal spaces for launching sustainable practices and developing projects on a large scale.<sup>3</sup>

### **Study objectives:**

The purpose of presenting this article, we call for clarifying the importance of the university as an educational institution and its role in contributing to achieving sustainable development.

### **Problem of the study:**

This paper aims to answer:

Contemporary human societies require serious scientific interaction with sustainability questions more than ever before, it is an urgent and necessary requirement that cannot be delayed, as sustainable development is a very broad field that requires special attention from the university institution, and thus the university's contribution to achieving sustainable development has become a basic requirement and bet, so that society can restore its progress and development, in all areas of life. The role of universities in meeting the requirements of sustainable development is considered one of the most important challenges they face, so how can university institutions contribute to achieving sustainable development?

## **2. The concept of sustainable development:**

Among the definition provided

Development is a process of positive change at the social and economic level, and the implementation of intermediate means - and long-term goal plans carried out by humans with the aim of moving society to a better situation in all economic, social, humanitarian and environmental fields, in line with its needs without

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3 - Barbawi Kamal, Soleimani Elias, the role of the university in achieving sustainable development and serving the local community, the international forum on: "The university and openness to the external environment, waits and bets" on April 29/30, 2018, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Guelma.



harming the environment. Development is a comprehensive process whose success depends on what humans do, while sustainability means continuity and extension to other terms, meaning the necessity for current generations to leave a sufficient stock of cognitive and natural resources for future generations so that they can continue development and benefit from it.<sup>4</sup>

Sustainable development is a combination of performance elements, behaviors, skills, values and ideals that a person acquires through learning that is reflected in improving his level of productivity. Education is considered one of the most important requirements for development and a person must be able to face the challenges facing him and protect the environment in a way that ensures the sustainability of natural resources and finds options and alternatives to the problems that society may face. The development dimension is not achieved away from university education in particular. In 1983, the United Nations formed a World Commission on Environment and Development headed by the Prime Minister of Norway, Bruntland Gro Harlem, to study the problems of the environment and development on planet Earth. The concept of sustainable development was officially addressed in 1987 through the Bruntland Commission and a report entitled "Our Common Future" appeared. It defined it as "the necessity of achieving the right to development so that the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations are equally achieved." We conclude that sustainable development is nothing but development that meets the needs of the present without limiting the needs of future generations to work to meet them.<sup>5</sup>

In the report of the Scientific Committee on Environment and Development, development is defined as: "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations."<sup>6</sup>

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4 - Heba Tawfiq Abu Eyada, The Role of Universities in Sustainable Development, Journal of Al-Mustafa University College, Iraq, 2021, pp. 308-309.

5 - Bousaha Mohamed Lakhdar, and Bahous Nusseibeh, The Role of the University in Embodying Sustainable Development, Shuaa Journal of Economic Studies, Volume 3, Issue 1, March 2017, Algeria, p. 72.

6 - Gendron, L.C. (2006). Développement Durable Comme Compromis. Québec ; presses de L'Université de Québec.p 166.



### 3. Characteristics of sustainable development:

The most important characteristics of sustainable development can be mentioned as follows:

- Because the time dimension is the basis of long-term development.<sup>7</sup>
- the vital processes in the biosphere such as gases, for example, so it is a development that requires not depleting vital energies.
- It is an integrated development based on coordination between the negatives of using resources, investment trends and technological choice, and makes them all work in harmony within the environmental system in a way that preserves them and achieves the desired continuous development, such as applying the green marketing philosophy in organizations.<sup>8</sup>

### 4. 4. University institutions and sustainable development, what role do they have?

It is noted that the function of higher education has evolved over the decades, Previous studies indicate a shift in the mission of higher education, to the second function, which is scientific research, in the mid-fifties, then this function evolved in the late twentieth century to the third function, which is the two-way link, which can be considered a mixed version of the interaction between higher education institutions and society. This concept is considered a new development in the mission of higher education, as while universities used to simply provide their scientific services to society in one direction, they now provide their scientific services in an interactive or two-way manner between the academic community and the outside world. In other words, higher education has begun to receive

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7 - Abeer Megahed, Sustainability of Arab Universities and Achieving Sustainable Development, Countries' Experiences (Newcastle - Maribo Universities), Egyptian Journal of Development and Planning, Egypt, Volume 28, Issue 02, December 2020, pp. 54-55.

8 - Bousaha Mohamed Lakhdar, and Bahous Nusseibeh, The Role of the University in Embodying Sustainable Development, Shuaa Journal of Economic Studies, Volume 3, Issue 1, March 2017, Algeria, p.73.



feedback from society about its needs, requirements and the problems it faces, and thus universities, on the other hand, develop their scientific tools to meet these requirements, thus becoming partners in community construction and present in all its details.<sup>9</sup>

Achieving sustainable development calls for making knowledge accessible to all segments of society and developing strategies for building potential capacities and community participation,

Sustainable development cannot be achieved through technological solutions, political systems or financial instruments. However, achieving sustainable development requires changing the way we think and work, which , knowledge and skills that help individuals find new solutions to social, economic and environmental problems. This definition contains two main elements: the first is represented by needs and the second is arranged by imposed constraints. Sustainability is a model for thinking about the future in which development<sup>10</sup> .

The goal of education for sustainable development is to enable us to face current and future global challenges constructively and creatively, and to create more sustainable and adaptable societies. A strong education system enhances access to opportunities, improves health, and strengthens societies, while increasing economic growth in a way that enhances and accelerates these processes.<sup>11</sup>

According to UNESCO, there are four main drivers that must be considered in the educational process in order to achieve sustainable development through education:

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9 - Musa Ajouz, and Samer Al-Arfawi, Practical Scientific Innovation in Technology Development through Community Responsibility, the Second International Arab Conference: Social Responsibilities of Universities (Compliance and Legislation) , Jordan, 2019, pp. 05-06

10 - UNESCO 2019, Education for Sustainable Development. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

11 - Musa Ajouz, Samer Al-Arfawi, The Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Sustainable Development through Social Responsibility, the Second International Arab Conference: Social Responsibility of Universities (Commitment and Legislation), Jordan, 2023. p. 11



**First:** Enhancing and improving the quality of education. This process requires focusing on effective learning and teaching methods that continuously support learners' abilities and diverse talents to acquire the necessary knowledge, practical skills and applied behavior resulting from an advanced intellectual .so that educated generations emerge capable of making decisions, helping themselves and others solve problems and finding innovative solutions to thorny issues, while providing a safe environment for education, creativity, health and positive interaction between different educational groups and the surrounding community.

**Second:** Reorienting current educational institutions at all levels to address sustainable development issues, as some schools and universities have become educational laboratories for sustainable development where young people are prepared to adapt and help mitigate environmental impacts at their local levels.

**Third:** Training the workforce on the requirements of sustainable development. The important role played by higher education institutions through community partnership programs is the most important tool in these two goals, in addition to rehabilitation and training programs, which requires integrating education strategies, tools and goals into national development policies.<sup>12</sup>

Among the responsibilities that fall on university institutions within the framework of achieving sustainable development:

- Developing human capital to achieve economic development by giving priority to education and training and considering the role of experience and acquired skills as one of the main independent variables affecting the production process and the economic development process.

- Developing human capital as a means to achieve sustainable human development. Human development is related to expanding the options available to university students to live the life they value, and thus it is related to economic growth.

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12 - Musa Ajouz, Samer Al-Arqawi, The Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Sustainable Development through Social Responsibility, the Second International Arab Conference: Social Responsibility of Universities (Commitment and Legislation), Jordan, 2023. p. 11



- Developing human capital as one of the requirements of sustainable development by supporting various aspects and implementing various policies, and involving all parties and groups in a way that allows, by reducing the waste of all economic, material and moral resources and using them optimally.<sup>13</sup>

## 5. Conclusion:

Higher education has witnessed a great expansion and interest as a result of the changes witnessed by the world. so we now notice that all developing countries have become directed towards developing human resources and exploiting them, as it has become clear that the basic and effective component in development processes in its various fields and sectors.

It is clear that the university plays a vital role in raising awareness about sustainable development and achieving it within society, through community activities, research programs and educational curricula. In this context, universities can adopt sustainable strategies, such as enhancing the quality of human resources and implementing renewable energy.<sup>14</sup>

## Recommendations:

1. Develop a strategic vision for higher education that works to achieve structural synergy between it and societies to achieve a combination that includes integrating the functions of higher education to achieve human development, social development, and sustainable economic development.

2. Lifelong education and learning strategies are directly directed towards supporting economic sectors and private business activities and work to achieve integration between education and continuous training by establishing effective innovative systems based on research and development to produce knowledge or reproduce it in the fields of science and technology and its applications in industry.

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13 - Ibtisam Milad Hadidan, and Amal Milad Hadidan, The Role of University Institutions in Achieving Sustainable Development through Vocational Training, Gharyan University Journal, Volume 13, Issue 25, Libya, 2022, pp. 08-09.

14 - Jehan Hazim Habib Mustafa, Sanaa Maali, Amal Abdelkader Ghazy, Muna Hassn Babiker Aldaw, Nesreen Abdou ElHadiede, The Role of Scientific Research in Achieving Sustainable Development According to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 from the Point of View of Faculty Members at the University of Ha'il, Journal of Ecohumanism, Volume: 3, No: 8, pp. 2841.



3. Link new education strategies with serious initiatives to weave interaction between the academic. of work on the other hand through the emergence of partnership projects between universities and business institutions.

4. Transform higher education institutions, especially universities, into research centers and incubators for knowledge industry projects at small and medium levels, especially software industry projects and information technology services.