The history and creation of the Agenda 2030: Designing the sustainable development goals

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Summary:

This article analyzes and studies the history and background of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Firstly, a historical journey has been made to understand the evolution and development of education up to the arrival of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development action plan. In this way, a timeline was presented that reflects the path taken by the United Nations and the international community to arrive at To reach this new international framework. In this line, the post-2015 agenda, conferences, summits and international decades have been examined, as they were decisive events for the adoption of the SDGs. A official UN documents and programmes were analysed, demonstrating the enormous volume of documentation that has been published on the subject. There is no better way to understand the international interest generated by the proposed topic than to read the "Preamble1" of Resolution A/RES/70/1, 25September 2015, Transforming our world: the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this document you can find the new proposal for a better and higher quality future for all people on the planet.

Key words: History, Sustainable, Development, Goals, Agenda.

1. A historical journey before the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

1. 1. International conventions that led to the creation of the SDGs

The UN celebrates decades - ten-year cycles to achieve specific goals - with the aim of making specific events have a greater international impact. This section looks at different decades that have left their mark on the current international SDG proposal, specifically those related to inclusive learning and attention to diversity.

Thanks to the First United Nations Development Decade (1960-1970), measures and programmes were created to eliminate illiteracy, hunger and disease; a clear commitment to achieve inclusive education for all. Different conferences and campaigns were organised: the *Conference on the Problems of Economic Development* - where conclusions were gathered from the least developed countries -, the *World Campaign against Hunger, Disease and Ignorance*, and the *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*. In this context, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was created in 1965 with the aim of supporting countries, promoting change, facilitating access to knowledge and democratic governance, reducing poverty, promoting crisis prevention and recovery, protecting the environment, promoting sustainable energy and providing solutions to eliminate HIV/AIDS. (Castillo, 2007). This agenda, as will be seen below, was central to the elaboration and development of the MDGs and SDGs. This decade, unlike the following ones, did not have goals and targets, nor did it have a body in charge of monitoring compliance with the measures adopted, which made it difficult to achieve.

After the evaluation of the first measures, it was noted that the goals set had not been reached; therefore, in view of the needs, the Second United Nations Development Decade (1971-1980) was proclaimed. (Naciones Unidas, 1970).

The resolution contains terminology, ideas and approaches that are linked to today's SDGs, such as goals and targets, as well as review and assessment.

In order to alleviate the hunger situation in the 1970s, the *World Food Conference* was created and adopted the *Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition,* which laid the foundation for the SDGs 1 and 2. (Programa Mundial de Alimentos, 2009).

In this context of inequality, the General Assembly convened its sixth special session in 1974, during which it adopted the *Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order "based on equity, equality, sovereignty, independence, common interest and cooperation of all states"*. The final proposal was made up of twenty principles on which a new order should be based. A very relevant fact in this document is this call for a new order, as it is based on the same criteria that the SDGs propose today.

The review of these periods, according to the experts, had failed, since the goals were not met, as the UN General Assembly itself pointed out, and therefore proposed the Third United Nations Development Decade (1981-1990), which set out new strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Jackson (2007)The General Assembly itself also noted this, and therefore proposed the Third United Nations Development Decade (1981-1990), which set out new strategies for reducing inequality between countries and eliminating poverty and dependence on rich countries. (Naciones Unidas, 1981). Months later, the UN Commission on Human Rights set up a group of governmental experts to review and evaluate the implementation of the new international development strategy. This group was tasked with studying the scope and content of the right to development and proposing ways to ensure the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights. The importance of this decade for the SDGs is undeniable, as it sets goals, targets and monitoring (measurement is increasingly present, which will help with self-criticism).

In 1986, the resolution entitled *Declaration on the Right to Development* was adopted. Its ten articles are a declaration of intent that calls for a return to the

origins of the UN Charter. This expert group is very similar to the current Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG). The group's objectives include: developing an indicator framework for global monitoring; providing technical support for their application; ensuring the use of agreed and harmonised definitions; reviewing methodological developments on indicators and their metadata; and working in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. These targets demonstrate that the current SDGs have absorbed the best of all these years.

This declaration offers a transcendental definition for the object of study, that of the right to development, which they define as follows:

> It is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of all individuals and peoples, on the basis of their participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom.... (Naciones Unidas, 1986b, p. 1).

This concept is not specific to the UN, as it is first found in the *General Conference of the International Labour Organisation,* known as the Declaration of Philadelphia (ILO, 1944). They have a very extensive development that will be analysed in detail in later sections and goes as far as the 2030 Agenda.

Continuing with the proposed historical development, in the 1990s the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991/2000) was approved. In this decade, the previous mistakes and all the vocabulary of the new international economic order were left behind, but years later a negative evaluation was made again, this time blamed on the unforeseen events of the world economy. (Del Castillo, 2000).

García (2017) speaks of three stages in the UN regarding human rights education: an intuitive first stage (1948-1993), a second stage of awareness-raising (1993-2004) and a final stage of consolidation and projection (2004 onwards). (Muñoz, 2016). As it is not only the development decades discussed in the previous pages that have influenced the SDGs, we will now examine other

decades whose contribution to the 2030 Agenda is relevant, maintaining the chronological order established so far.

The first of the decades to be mentioned was the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). This decade came about at the suggestion of the *Vienna World Conference in* 1993, a discussion of which will follow later. During this period it was the only global mechanism for dissemination, research and education, until the advent of the MDGs and their goal two, "basic education for all". (Magendzo, 2006).

With this decade, the importance of equitable and real education for the UN is once again evident. The document brings us closer to the wording of ESD, where human rights are specifically mentioned as a pathway to sustainable development. The resolution of the decade proposes a pathway for political leaders to put action plans in place. It also sought to minimise adult basic education by promoting education systems that seek to develop people on the basis of the common good and human rights. (Naciones Unidas, 1996c).

The proposal made was very similar to the 2030 Agenda. The plan of action explains the bases, principles and objectives, but what is most interesting for this study is the explanation for the implementation of the programme and the evaluation, which is undoubtedly the basis for the MDGs and SDGs in terms of education. On this occasion, the UN would produce a document with different methods to call for action in the respective countries, an approach that is maintained with the SDGs, as each government has autonomy for its involvement and implementation (United Nations, 1997). This time, two periods of evaluations were carried out, in a first half (Naciones Unidas, 2000b) and the final (Naciones Unidas, 2004b).

Following these evaluations, the World Programme for Human Rights Education (2005-present) was proclaimed with the aim of continuing to work on the objectives set out in the decade just analysed and to consolidate the idea that education is a powerful tool for making human rights a reality and their fulfilment.

This programme is developed in different stages that help to understand the proposal of education in which everyone is included:

1. The first phase (2005-2009) (UNESCO, 2006b) focuses on the primary and secondary education systems. At this point, the need for a broader and more systematic national vision is raised. (UNESCO, 2010a). At this point, the MDGs were at the halfway point and focused on meeting their targets. Goal two of the global proposal sought to achieve primary school enrolment for all the world's children, a drive to achieve equal education for all. With the advantages that time has given us, nowadays it is scarce to stick to the number of students enrolled in order to promote equitable education, since the best way to achieve this would be to know the number of students who complete the educational process.

2. The second phase (2010-2014) focuses on human rights education for higher education and training programmes for learners. The new global goals, which were to follow the MDGs, were already beginning to be worked on, and one of the main improvements was to increase cooperation between agencies of all kinds. (UNESCO, 2010b). If comprehensive, rights-based education was to be pursued, universities had to be involved.

3. The third phase, (2015-2019) was dedicated to strengthening the implementation of the first two phases and promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists (United Nations, 2014c).

Following the proposed timeline, different decades that laid the foundations for the SDGs are analysed. Thus, the first (Naciones Unidas, 1997b) and second (Naciones Unidas, 2007c) United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, 1997/2006-2008/2017. In the first half of the first decade, the MDGs had already been adopted. The first of these related to poverty eradication, a clear evidence of the influence of this decade on the MDGs. The assessment of the first decade called for more time, more uniformity in progress and a holistic approach - in

short, a broader vision for solving the problem. (Naciones Unidas, 2007a). During the second decade, more emphasis was placed on efficient coordination and on contributing to the achievement of the SDGs, which, unlike the previous ones, would be reflected in the first two, *End Poverty* and *Zero Hunger.* (Naciones Unidas, 2010a).

In 2001, the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World was proclaimed - the continuation of the aforementioned United Nations Decade for Human Rights - which deepens both the concept of a *culture* of peace as a transdisciplinary project (Naciones Unidas, 1997a) and the concept of *education for sustainable development.* This decade transformed the way of thinking about children and generated a movement for peace that was reflected in the SDGs. (Gonzalo, y Gorjón, 2011).

Three of the articles that make up this document are relevant to this study: the first, which recognises the culture of peace as a set of values, attitudes, traditions, behaviours and lifestyles based on sustainable development; the fourth, which states that education is fundamental to achieving it; and the eighth, which argues that NGOs and other areas involved in education are key agents in achieving this culture. In the proposed action plan, similarities have been noted with target 4.7 which, as will be seen below, deals with global citizenship; indeed there are references to promoting human rights, gender equality, tolerance, participation and solidarity. (Naciones Unidas, 1999).

UNESCO played a key role in demonstrating that education is the fundamental reference in the construction of such a culture of peace (Cabello *et al.,* 2016).

Another decade that influenced the creation of the SDGs was the United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All (2003-2012). "Literacy: a path to freedom". As can be read in the "Preamble" of resolution A/RES/56/116 adopting this decade, Member States are urged to advance the right to education for all and to foster the conditions for learning to reach everyone at every moment of their lives.

This document is relevant for its inclusion of all the initiatives on education that the UN had open and for the invitation to defend them jointly. The intention of this period was to promote the achievement of the six Education for All (EFA) goals - discussed in the followingpages - as well as to extend education to those who do not have access to it, and in particular to adults.

In UNESCO's first mid-decade assessment, the results were optimistic - increased literacy rates and increased awareness of the importance of education - but the same document acknowledged that progress was not enough, as millions of children were still out of school. (UNESCO, 2009b).

Other documents derived from this decade set out the guidelines for monitoring and measuring the goals, aspects that are basic to the 2030 Agenda:

- Resolution A/RES/63/154 and A/RES/61/140. They provided guidance on how to achieve better results and urged international agencies and governments to continue their work. (Naciones Unidas, 2007b; 2009a). The inclusive education proposal, within the SDGs, also provides a roadmap for achieving the outcomes.

- Resolution A/RES/59/149. Requesting reports on the implementation of the International Plan of Action every two years. (Naciones Unidas, 2005a). This initiative is maintained in the 2030 Agenda, an action plan through which countries can carry out voluntary reviews of their progress.

- Resolution A/RES/57/166 and A/RES/56/116. It welcomed the proposal and called for accountability to the decade, as well as flexibility for each country to adapt them according to its needs (United Nations, 2003; 2002a). Flexibility was one of the important lessons to be learned in order to achieve the global proposals.

- Resolution A/65/183. Proposed that a final assessment be made of the activities carried out by Member States and other stakeholders to achieve the goals of the decade (Naciones Unidas, 2011).

The last decade to be mentioned in order to understand the current UN educational approach is the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The following pages explain this action plan and its contribution to the concept of *education for sustainable development, which is* key to this study.

1.2 UN international conferences that contributed to the creation of the sustainable development goals

Different conferences have been selected since 1990, a date that has been chosen because it is the date that the previous global MDG agenda established as the starting line for assessing results. The conferences that have been researched are relevant, because they emerge as a change of strategy in approaching development and trying to meet the goals. (Sotillo, 2015; 2018).

It is necessary to go back a few months before the date on which the analysis of the summits and conferences began, as the Convention on the Rights of the Child had already entered into force and been ratified. This international treaty - which is obligatory and binding on the signatory countries, which must implement all the rights it recognises - is the most widely ratified in history, with 192 member countries having signed.

This convention was followed by the World Summit for Children, one of the first summits to call for international support for children. (Naciones Unidas, 1990)was one of the first summits where an international call was made to join in the support of children. The indications offered were for developing countries. At that time, cooperation was north-south, there were no common objectives, and the countries with the most resources were proposing solutions to countries with socio-economic difficulties. The global proposal of the SDGs, in contrast to other plans, calls on all citizens and all future generations.

Another conference that must be cited in order to understand the Agenda is the United Nations *Conference on Environment and Development.* (Naciones Unidas, 1992). Here, the interests of all were sought in order to create a new global partnership. The declaration understood the concept of *sustainability as a* path to a more balanced world, and called for the "eradication of poverty", goal 1 of the MDGs, and created Agenda 21, which consisted of a plan of global, national and local actions to be carried out by UN entities, the governments of its Member States and individual groups. The MDGs and SDGs have tools and programmes similar to Agenda 21 to achieve the stated goals. The declaration cited the right to development, linking law, development and sustainability, concepts that will stabilise over time until they become indivisible.

The next world conference that contributed to the research was the *World Conference on Human Rights*, which, in its paragraph six, underlined the link between development and human rights: "The World Conference on Human Rights reaffirms the right to development [...] as an integral part of fundamental human rights" (United Nations, 1993, p. 5). (Naciones Unidas, 1993. p. 5).

The following year, the *International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)* took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. (Naciones Unidas, 1994). In this case, principle five addressed social, economic and political development as a way to improve the quality of people. It also highlighted education as a key factor in sustainable development and specified that there was an interdependent relationship between education and demographic and social change.

Another summit of note was the World Summit for Social Development, which was intended to be a summit of hope, commitment and action. The summit acknowledged the influence of the above summits, which demonstrates the relevance and contribution of the above events. This congress based social development on human dignity, human rights, equality, respect, peace, democracy, mutual accountability and cooperation. (Naciones Unidas, 1995b).

Following the proposed timeline, the *Fourth World Conference on Women* took place, whose influence is direct, as it is present in MDG 3: *Promote gender equality and empower women* and SDG 5: *Gender equality.* (Naciones Unidas, 1995d). This conference was a milestone in the fight for equality. (Giménez Armentia, 2007)It is relevant to highlight the document's commitment to promoting "people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth, through basic education, lifelong learning, literacy and skills training, and primary health care for girls and women", a proposal very similar to that of the SDG 5: Gender Equality. (Naciones Unidas, 1995d, p.13)a proposal very similar to that of target 4.7 discussed in this study.

Before concluding this overview, it is necessary to mention the *Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements. This* conference recognised a worldwide deterioration of settlements and living conditions, and stated that cities should be places where people can live with dignity, good health, happiness and hope; objectives similar to those set by the social entities we are working with in this study. As a result of the conference, it is worth highlighting the Habitat Agenda, which maintains the line of strengthening local institutions in order to achieve the objectives and proposes a plan to achieve the agreements. (Naciones Unidas, 1996a). It is relevant that the declaration recognises that:

> A new era of cooperation is dawning, the era of a philosophy of solidarity. (...) The hope of a common future and an exhortation to engage in an enterprise of undoubted value and interest, that of building together a world in which all live in a secure home with the promise of a decent life in dignity, good health, safety, happiness and hope (United Nations 1996, p. 9).

From this conference and its conclusions there were references in the MDGs, not only behind SDG 7: *Ensure environmental sustainability*, which would be self-evident, but also in SDGs 2, 4 and 5, where the MDGs would be central to their achievement. SDG 11 takes up the work of these two conferences, but concern for the planet is one of the five central axes of goals 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

After analysing the meetings mentioned in the previous pages, the clearest precedent emerges in terms of its form, model and methodology: the MDGs. Following its success and hope, in the words of its secretary, Ban Ki-Moon, in the foreword to the 2015 MDG Report, "there is no doubt that we can fulfil our shared responsibility to end poverty, leaving no one behind, and create a world of dignity for all" (United Nations, 2015, p. 3).

The document accepted that there was still a long way to go, but recognised that global action works and is the only path to a balanced future and a life of dignity for all (Naciones Unidas, 2015b).

The turn of the century was a good time for the 189 countries to consider new strategies and to return to the roots of the UN. Resolution 53/202, adopted on 17 December 1998, agreed to hold the UN Millennium Assembly in the year 2000. This was the largest gathering of heads of state and/or government ever held in the world.

The report that helps to understand the new objectives is *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21ST Century* (A/54/2000). (Naciones Unidas, 1998b). The concern of the time was to rethink the UN and its international role. The document analysed the situation of the world through a journey from the creation of the UN to sustainability, seeking the greatest support from the civilian population while renewing the UN.

Within this framework, it was decided to organise the Millennium Summit. (Naciones Unidas, 2000c)The Millennium Declaration (A/RES550/L.2), which aimed to "achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and just world". The document called for the responsibility of all based on human dignity; an idea that reinforces and reaffirms the UN's thinking, as this declaration was based on previous conferences.

1.3 The World Summit: The Millennium Goals.

The Millennium Summit was a moment of international coordination, illusion and hope in every sense. It was believed from the outset that it would be possible to achieve the goals set and that the world would be turned around. These goals focused on specific problems and their success surprised many, even transforming the agenda of world leaders. (Stiglitz, 2015). Ban Ki-Moon (2015) acknowledged in the final report of the goals that they had generated the most successful anti-poverty movement in history. The new global agenda created new rules of the game so that all countries could work together towards the common goal of eradicating poverty and hunger and improving the quality of life of all the world's citizens. The MDGs epitomised basic needs and fundamental rights that no person should be without. (Villamil y Romero, 2011).

The initiative - spearheaded by Kofi Annan - was presented as a way to take action by conveying the interconnectedness of many problems and the possibility of achieving a better world. (Ministerio de Educación, 2009). The first official reports already foresaw that more work was needed, although the results were improving. (Sachs, 2005).

To monitor the eight proposed goals, an interagency Interagency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, the IAEG MDGs, was established under the UN Secretary General's Bureau for Economic and Social Affairs, which also includes governmental and statistical agencies. These agencies were responsible for preparing data to monitor progress. Their tasks also included defining methodologies and technical issues to assist in the reading and presentation of the data. (CEPAL, 2010). The work of this group was essential to provide meaningful analysis of the results. (Naciones Unidas, 2013a). It is relevant that so much emphasis is placed on measurement and monitoring, as this study pursues the same objective.

Necessarily, because of its direct relationship to the analysis under study, a detailed analysis of the assessment of MDG 2: *Achieve universal primary education* has been carried out, which is essential for a complete view of the

construct proposed here. This goal is the prelude to what will happen years later with the SDGs.

Education, from this moment on, was conceived as the axis of human development, an idea present in the approach of the MDGs, although, as mentioned above, the fact that it is part of human rights obliged to achieve full compliance. The right to education is directly related to the development of people and their growth; it has to do with increasing the quality of life at all levels. (Naciones Unidas, 2005b).

The goals set were threefold: to ensure that they could complete a full cycle of primary education, net enrolment rate in primary education, and proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach the last grade of primary education. These proposals were a milestone because they presented a concrete way of working with clear and concise objectives that would help an optimal evaluation of the process.

This proposal was heavily criticised for being ill-considered and going against the universality of education. (González-Geraldo, 2015)However, as shown in different evaluations, enrolment rates during the years in which the MDGs were active increased by 8 %, as well as school absenteeism decreased by 43 %, which would reflect the improvement in these areas. However, much work remained to be done, because 59 million children were still out of school - 53% of whom were girls - and another 124 million children in the world were unable to complete primary school. (Naciones Unidas, 2015a).

It was recognised, following this objective, that not only the school is an engine of change, but that learning takes place in communities and families, a relevant idea, as the fieldwork carried out in this study is very much community-based. (UNICEF, 2007)This is a relevant idea, since the fieldwork carried out in this study is very much community-based. Education, necessarily, had to go hand in hand with the other goals, as it is the necessary pillar to end poverty. The EFA conferences, discussed in detail below, clearly influenced the approach to this goal (Alonso and Atienza, 2005).

The MDGs did not create legal obligations for states, but - as we have seen - political commitments, which meant that in some countries they were not taken seriously enough. It can be concluded that the achievements were too concrete and did not address the totality.

This section should not end without a brief qualitative assessment of these global commitments. These goals generated international confluence, led the way to end inequalities, gave visibility to the problem, upheld the belief in the responsibility of each individual for the eradication of problems and placed education on global agendas. It was, until then, the most important commitment to improve living conditions (Amnesty International, 2010). The goals allowed for the consolidation of the measurement and quality of the processes proposed to achieve the goals. This form of measurement generated a scientific basis that has consolidated the monitoring and follow-up of the SDGs.

Criticism and proposals for improvement were not slow in coming. The targets set to achieve the goals were very general, unambitious, and left many global problems off the agenda; as stated in the conference *From the MDGs to the SDGs: Analysis and critical appraisal of the new 2030 Agenda* (Unceta *et al.,* 2012).

The social partners did not allow the deadlines to expire in order to carry out the corresponding evaluation. It was clear that there were disparities in meeting the goals (Progress for Children, 2010). Vandemoortele (2002)The MDG drafter stated that his intention was not to formulate an agenda for international development and that the proposal was based on assumptions about historical trends in global progress, which seems to indicate a flaw in the approach. Others emphasised more strongly that the goals had to be tailored to the different realities of countries. (Cecchini *et al.,* 2006).

They were also reproached for the lack of a global study where programmes were not only made for the countries of the South, but for all of them equally. (Sanahuja, 2016). Another of the experts who spoke of the lights and shadows

of these objectives was (García Olmedo, 2015)The expert, who asserted that progress was uneven and that the project was ineffective in tackling the most serious problems, such as hunger and poverty, also criticised the lack of a global study in which programmes would not only be made for the countries of the South, but for all of them.

Results in education were not positive, and progress was timid; this is evident in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015: Did we make it?* on the outcomes of the Dakar Plan of Action. While it has to be said that the data on out-of-school enrolment and gender parity were encouraging, they were not. (Naciones Unidas, 2015b).

Mention should be made of the report that the Secretary-General issued prior to the adoption of the SDGs entitled The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty and Transforming Lives by Protecting the Planet. (Naciones Unidas, 2014a). It was a demand from countries for the full range of contributions to the post-2015 development agenda, a moment Ban Ki-Moon used to speak of a "crossroads of history" and to take stock of the contributions of previous decades.

2. The process of elaborating the sustainable development goals: Post-2015 Development Agenda

Before analysing the 2030 Agenda, it is necessary to mention the conferences and working documents that defined the SDGs. From the beginning of the drafting of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations wanted to put 62 working teams at the service of the project - in addition to other stakeholders such as the European Union, the G-77, regional groups, the G-20 - and thus rectify previous mistakes, such as not taking into account civil society and other social actors (Sanahuja, 2013).

Three years before the SDGs were approved, the process known as the Post-2015 Development Agenda began. This process, as Gómez Gil states (2018)This process, as Gómez Gil states, began before a comprehensive evaluation of the

previous goals had been carried out, thus lacking precise proven certainties that would make it possible to improve on the previous international agenda and its errors.

29 intergovernmental processes were launched from September 2012 to December 2015. A Sustainable Development Solutions Network (hereafter SDSN) was created. This network - which was one of the initiatives to promote sustainable development and design and implement the post-2015 global agenda - was organised into 12 technical working groups.

In order for the new agenda to have an international character and involve everyone, reports were commissioned that marked the path to the 2030 Agenda. A collective action solution was the only possible and effective way to address the new challenges of the era; a developed and collateral vision where sustainability was the guarantee was demanded. (Millán, 2015).

Numerous different reports were created to work towards new objectives to overcome the mistakes of the previous international plan (see table 1).

Table 1
Preparatory reports on the sustainable development goals

Name of the report	Year
The future we want for all of us	2012
A new global partnership: eradicating poverty and transforming economies through sustainable development	2013
A million voices: the world we want. A sustainable future with dignity for all	2013
Good education	2013
Start the global conversation	2013
Global commitment to inclusive and sustainable development: considerations on the post-2015 development agenda	2013
A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the UN post-2015 development agenda.	2013
Open Working Group of the General Assembly on the Sustainable Development Goals	2014
The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty and Transforming Lives while Protecting the Planet	2014
Sustainable Development starts with education: how education can contribute to the proposed post-2015 goals.	2014

| Universal commitment to human and sustainable development: Spain's position on the post-2015 Development Agenda | 2015 |

Below is an analysis of the different reports presented in Table 1 to understand their contribution to the SDGs. In the report *The Future We Want for All*, the aim was to support the consultation and participation process, which is important to involve and engage society in the achievement of the proposed goals. The report recommended building on the principles of human rights, equality and sustainability, as well as calling for shared responsibility and political commitment, with concrete goals and targets to enable progress to be measured (United Nations, 2012).

At that time post-2015, the global *Education First* initiative was born. (UNESCO, 2016d)which aimed to accelerate *progress towards the* Education for All (hereafter EFA) goals and the MDGs and to promote quality, relevant and transformative education. The initiative focused on three priorities: getting all children into school, improving the quality of learning and promoting global citizenship. (Naciones Unidas, 2012). These documents emphasise the centrality of education - post-2015 sustainable development begins with education and is essential to achieving the goals (UNESCO, 2014d) - making inclusive education and learning two of the pillars of the new proposal.

Another publication that affected the creation and drafting of the SDGs was the report *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development* in this case it was commissioned to make recommendations for the post-2015 Development Agenda. This report is relevant because it would bring together what would later become known as the 5 Ps, goals that focused on the planet, people, peace, prosperity and partnerships.

The next document presented was *A Million Voices: The World We Want A sustainable future with dignity for all.* This report was the result of a global consultation of more than one million people. Importantly for this project, there

was a particular focus on the views of the poor and marginalised. In terms of global citizenship and inclusive education, it is also a relevant report, as vulnerable children were mentioned. It referred to the importance of establishing policies and plans to support disadvantaged people and their basic competences to achieve optimal personal development in line with the environment. The document added the need to support children in non-formal education settings. (Naciones Unidas, 2013c).

There are also references to education for sustainable development as a framework for including sustainability and global citizenship training. The consultation was led by UNESCO and UNICEF, regional meetings were held, with NGOs and high-level experts, and these were followed by a global thematic consultation. It is important to note, within the framework of this study, that *good education* was by far the item that aroused the most interest, as can be seen in the report summarising the results. (ONU, 2013d). The same report reflected the participants' clamour to go beyond the quantitative. Another valuable report was *Inicia la conversación global*, a document analysing the votes that had been taken so far, over a period of one year.

The report *An action agenda for sustainable development* supports the four dimensions of society: economic development, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and good governance. Relevant is the call for the support of non-formal education programmes as a tool for the achievement of the goals. (Red de Soluciones para el Desarrollo Sostenible, 2013). In the same year, the document *A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the millennium development goals and advancing the UN post-2015 development agenda* was also presented. (Naciones Unidas, 2013c)which included the recommendation to create a universal, integrated and human rights-based agenda for development for all.

It is in this context that *UNESCO's General Conference* emerged, where the "Education Strategy 2014-2021" was adopted, with four strategic objectives: to help develop education systems that foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning, to empower learners to be creative and responsible global citizens, and

to promote EFA and define the future education agenda. The wording of its overarching goal is very similar to that of SDG 4: "*Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030", which* shows the strong influence of these conferences on the final outcome.

Another important report was that of the *Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals*, which already read the proposal for the SDGs as they are now known (Naciones Unidas, 2014b).

Also noteworthy is the document *The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty and Transforming Lives by Protecting the Planet*, which compiles all the contributions to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This report is the starting point for the SDGs. (Naciones Unidas, 2014a).

This was the year 2015, when it was necessary to take a break and assess whether the proposed goals had been achieved. The General Assembly recognised some important advances, but was categorical in stating that there were many people who continued to suffer from poverty and hunger.

Another report related to this study is *Sustainable Development Begins with Education: How education can contribute to the proposed post-2015 goals*. This document highlighted the pivotal role of education in the new agenda, being the starting point for the new goals and an enabler for the achievement of the new targets. It reviewed the relationship of education to the 16 proposed goals and concluded that education accelerates progress and is key to development. (UNESCO, 2014d).

The working paper *Global Commitment to Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Considerations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda* also stands out as a text that highlights the contribution of the MDGs and the path opened up by the UN to set a universal agenda in which everyone had a contribution to make. According to this study, the MDGs succeeded in drawing international attention to the problems that were now everyone's responsibility and that could be measured within a specific timeframe. As improvements, they

called for the need for everyone to take ownership of the goals by involving everyone in the goals, accepting the heterogeneity of societies and identifying their priorities, which would make the markers more pluralistic and flexible. (Alonso *et al.,* 2013).

3. Conclusions

The new international framework proposed by the United Nations through its Sustainable Development Goals aims to empower citizens to take a leading role in the construction of fairer cities. A roadmap that currently allows all people to be included in progress in a comprehensive and cross-cutting manner.

The legal structure is not simple, as each country had to work on its goals from its diversity, without binding character or legal effects. Although the proposal goes beyond the borders of each country, the goals have to be achieved by all countries. In fact, there is only one purpose, but two territorial frameworks for action. (García Matíes, 2016).

In 2016, UNDP published *From MDGs to Sustainable Development for All: Lessons Learned from 15 Years of Practice*, a document that captured the lessons from the MDGs and improvements in education, health and citizen prosperity. (PNUD, 2016).

The MDGs were central to the creation of the next international agenda. They offered many lessons that were kept in mind, such as the need to adapt to the reality of each country, to create flexible documents and frameworks, and to focus on the relationship of all institutions and people so that change comes from within.

This led to the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the most ambitious global agenda adopted by the international community to call for collective action around common goals for people, planet and prosperity. (Gómez Gil, 2018) Its intention was to strengthen universal peace and access to justice; as well as to achieve the participation of all to encourage all of humanity to move

in the same direction and thus achieve the goals that were not achieved in the previous proposal.

As demonstrated, the current proposal is an improvement over the previous plan. This research and historical review shows that an attempt has been made to change some of the mistakes of the past. One of the greatest achievements has been the involvement of civil society in the creation and design of the 2030 Agenda. This can be seen in the sympathy aroused in citizens for each of the goals. Another important benefit has been the inclusion of all countries, the most developed and the least developed. We have understood that change will only be possible to the extent that governments around the world and citizens promote sustainability in all areas.

The history and creation of the SDGs demonstrates that the 2030 Agenda makes complete sense and meets criteria that are at the origin of the United Nations. The proposed goals respond to current problems and seek to generate change.

4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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