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The Role of Education Towards Sustainable Development:
The Case Study of AIESEC & Harvesting Future Leaders' Education
Project in Jakarta, Indonesia

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'*One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world*'

Malala Yousafzai

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Resumo

A Agenda 2030 com os seus dezassete Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável constitui o documento mais universal e ambicioso alguma vez adotado pelas Nações Unidas, cujo objetivo é não deixar ninguém para trás, tendo em conta as necessidades de todas as pessoas, principalmente dos grupos mais vulneráveis que constituem uma sociedade. A importância atribuída à inclusão sublinha, portanto, a necessidade de identificar quem é deixado para trás e de que maneira.

O objetivo do estudo aqui apresentado é abordar a importância do papel da educação como pilar fundamental na consecução da Agenda 2030. Analisar o contributo da AIESEC no desenvolvimento de capacidades de liderança nos jovens, encorajando-os a pensar, a criticar e a incentivá-los a tomarem atitudes tendo em vista a concretização de um mundo sustentável. Para servir este propósito, a dissertação analisou o trabalho conduzido pela Harvesting Future Leaders que tem como objetivo principal proporcionar uma educação de qualidade e inovadora a crianças que vivem em zonas rurais em Jacarta, Indonésia.

Acima de tudo, o objetivo aqui em análise é tentar encontrar o procedimento que deve ser utilizado e que melhor se adequa à concretização do desenvolvimento sustentável em qualquer sociedade. Desta maneira, será analisado como é que este estudo sobre o desenvolvimento sustentável deve passar de Quê? para Como? a fim de implementar a Agenda 2030. As pessoas perguntam como é que podemos tornar objetivos ambiciosos em mais-valias para as sociedades - para a qual a educação é a parte mais relevante da resposta.

Palavras-chave: Desenvolvimento Sustentável, Agenda 2030, educação, EPT, EDS, inovação, desigualdades, AIESEC, Harvesting Future Leaders, Indonésia, crianças

Abstract

The Agenda 2030 with its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals is the most comprehensive, universal and ambitious document ever adopted by the United Nations, whose ultimate goals is to leave no-one behind, taking into account the needs of all people, especially the different vulnerable groups in the society. This focus on inclusiveness underscores the need to identify who is being left behind and in what ways.

The purpose of the study is to elaborate on the importance of the role of education and its positive impact as a potential foundation of the sustainable development agenda, while evaluating how AIESEC has facilitated the development of leadership skills among the youth population by encouraging them to think critically as well as take action towards the achievement of a more sustainable world. As such, the dissertation assessed the work conducted by Harvesting Future Leaders in providing quality and innovative education to rural children in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Moreover, the dissertation will consider that a key issue is to define the most effective enabler and accelerator of sustainable development, to nurture the power of sustainability and development multipliers of every society. Accordingly, it will be addressed the ways the debate on sustainable development should turn from '*what*' to '*how*' in order to implement the Agenda 2030. People are asking how we can turn ambitious goals into meaningful improvements, regarding which education is a crucial part of the answer.

Key words: Sustainable Development, Agenda 2030, education, EFA, ESD, innovation, inequality, AIESEC, Harvesting Future Leaders, Indonesia, children

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ADS – Asian Development Bank

AGSS – AIESEC Global Seminar Series

AIESEC – Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales

BOS – Bantuan Operasional Sekolah [School Operational Grant Programme]

DARE – Development Awareness Raising and Education

DE – Development Education

DEAR – Development Education and Awareness Raising

DT – Development Traineeships

EFA – Education for All

ESD – Education for Sustainable Development

ET – Education Traineeships

GE – Global Education

GENE – Global Education Network Europe

GTP – Global Theme Programmes

HDI – Human Development Index

HFL – Harvesting Future Leaders

HIV/AIDS – Human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome

HOSG – Heads of State and Government

IBXPs – Issue-Based AIESEC Experience

ILO – International Labour Organisation

IS – Information System

ITP – International Theme Programs

LN – Learning Network

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MT – Management Traineeships

NGOs – Non-governmental Organisations

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

P&P – Programs and Projects

PISA – Program for International Student Assessment

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

TT – Technical Traineeships

UN – United Nations

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF – United Nation's International Children's Emergency Fund

VENRO – Association of German Development Aid NGOs

WCED – World Commission on Environmental and Development

WIDE – World Inequality Database on Education

Youth4GG – Youth for the Global Goals

ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

INTRODUCTION

The following dissertation aims at highlighting the role of education as the potential foundation of sustainable development. As a matter of fact, the Agenda 2030 with its seventeen Sustainable Goals is the most comprehensive, universal and ambitious document ever adopted by the United Nations, whose ultimate goal is summarized by the slogan: "*no-one must be left behind. People who are hardest to reach should be given priority*". This is the underlying moral code of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its profound ethical foundation. Its adoption unanimously by 193 Heads of State and Government at the United Nations headquarters, in September 2015, made clear for the first time in history of humanity that ethics is not a 'luxury' that some people cannot afford, but the foundation of development. Moreover, among the Sustainable Development Goals, goal number four takes a particular position as education is unconditionally the foundation of sustainable development. It is about connecting the dots between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

As preliminary observation, it is worth noticing that development has not been people-centred enough, so far. In a world that is yet to be improved, inasmuch as there is still so many conflicts and inequality, it is up to us as human beings to secure equal access to quality education services for everyone. With the Incheon Declaration of Education 2030 document, a goal solely focused on education was set forth, which consequently represented a significant milestone in the construction of the Sustainable Development Goal number four to ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning. With the Incheon Declaration, primary education in developing countries reached a remarkable 91% enrolment by both boys and girls. Yet, about 57 million children still remain out of school and do not have access to basic education, nor complete four years of elementary school at least, as a result of a country's political situation, poverty, religion, territorial conflicts or wars. In many cases, the rural areas are the most affected by these challenges, insofar as the lack of investments in those areas is reflected in the overall quality and attendance of education among children living in rural areas. Indeed, the list of challenges children as well as teachers face in rural areas is numerous and affect each other both in direct and indirect ways. For example, teachers are usually temporary due to the poor infrastructure and access to schools. The main issue is that these teachers are not adequately skilled to teach quality education. In addition to this, there is a gap in transportation systems, which can explain the low attendance or absence of some children as the connectivity forces students and teachers to walk for hours to get to the schools. Other significant obstacles include lack of basic infrastructure and low level of interest in education for children in rural areas both from parents as well as politicians.

If human beings have survived for so long, it was mainly due to learning, the passing of knowledge, traditions and factors inherited from past generations to one another. Education is a

continuous process and shall continue throughout the existence of the world. The augmentation in the demand for knowledge as well as in the number of those who want to attend school, albeit some profound inequalities in the geographical and social distribution of available educational resources, have contributed to a transformation on the education systems everywhere. At present, teachers are slowly abandoning traditional teaching methods and slowly basing their teaching lessons in different innovative methods, such as project-based learning, design and creative thinking, e-learning, role-playing or flipped classrooms. The aim of innovative education is to push students towards critical thinking which enables them to develop as well as to realise their full potential in life while learning in a more pragmatic way.

In this regard, the dissertation will focus on one central aspect in the Agenda 2030, education, while examining the following research questions:

(i)   What is the definition of Education, understood in its broader sense?

(ii)   Which are the specific links between Education and the Sustainable Development Goals?

(iii)   What are the contributions of Education to achieve the SDGs?

(iv)   How does a model of Education based in SDGs works in a local Indonesian community?

More specifically, it will be considered that a key issue is to define the most effective enablers and accelerators of sustainable development in order to nurture the power of sustainability and development multipliers for every society. Accordingly, it will be addressed the ways the debate should turn form the 'what' to the 'how' in order to implement the Agenda 2030. Moreover, and in regard with the non-profit organisation AIESEC's initiative, this dissertation will also try to answer if innovative approaches in an educational setting can really help into reducing the educational and social constraints that will be identified through the literature review.

In order to start this dissertation, it is important to highlight different barriers that threaten the access to quality educational opportunities, special in the context of Indonesia, since my case study will focus on a human development and education approach offered by Harvesting Future Leaders to address the local educational challenges of Indonesian people living in rural areas.

Significant poverty and inequality levels are recognised as barriers to the access of educational opportunities worldwide. The current situation of the educational system in Indonesia, where the case study is based, is characterised by (i) relatively low money expenditure by the national government; (ii) scarce or low learning outcomes; (iii) teachers do not have adequate teaching skills; and (iv) low net enrolment rates in national schools. Whereas all of these problems have undermined education quality in various ways, it has also encouraged the growth of low-quality national educational institutions to absorb the demand of Indonesian people to have

access to a quality education. At the same time, it has limited the government's ability to pay teachers competitive salaries (Rosser, 2018). It is, therefore, important to capitalise on this investment and increase efficiency, which will require a more transparent as well as data-driven basis for assigning resources, better tailoring of provision to local needs, and stronger performance of management (*ibid.*). However, this problem can be unfolded in two distinctive ways (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015).

First, more than half of the Indonesian youth population does not master neither reading nor mathematics skills, and it will take at least 60 years more for Indonesia to reach the average of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in this matter (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015; The World Bank, 2018). For example, higher levels of literacy are important to sustain social cohesion in such a plural society, where more than 40% of the population lives on less than 2 US Dollars a day, and in some areas this proportion is over 90% (UNDP Indonesia, 2012). Policies aimed at improving rural infrastructure and expanding access to labour market as well as labour market mobility would significantly boost the earning of vulnerable families and consequently help combat inequality (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015). The top priority for Indonesia is to improve learning outcomes and to enable students to acquire core skills as well as understanding (The World Bank, 2018). This approach to education is aligned with the International Labour Organisation (ILO)'s following statement: "*Individuals are most employable when they have broad-based education and training, basic and portable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills*" (ILO, 2013).

Second, the level of educational attainment appears to correlate with poverty levels and the availability of services across Indonesia. In 2011, 5% of urban females and 10% of rural females had never attended any form of education, when compared to 4% of rural males and 1% of urban males (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015). Furthermore, almost 20% of rural females does not complete primary schooling, and the reasons for this dropout rates and school attainment still remain ambiguous (*ibid.*). It has been stressed that the nation remains under pressure and lack of quality talent in the professional world, inasmuch as less than half of the workforce participate in the formal sector and the formal unemployment rate is rather low: only 6%. In addition, informal employment is significant both in the agricultural sector – around 90% of employment) and non-agricultural – around 50% (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015).

The importance of education in the country might not be valorised neither in the current ways of teaching nor in the type of courses offered to the students (OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015; Rosser, 2018). Consequences of a solely theoretical curriculum focused on performance rate on final tests are that children are not adequately trained for the future and lack skills needed for solving simple to complex problems, thinking creatively as well as independently. As emphasized in the OECD/Asian Development Bank report '*Education in*

Indonesia: Rising to the Challenge' (2015): "*in school and beyond, closer attention should be paid to the relevance of education to employment and economic development. Indonesia needs more diversified and nationally coordinated system of vocational education with a high level of employer engagement. It will also require new steering mechanisms to increase linkages across government portfolios and between levels of government and raise community esteem for technical education and training.*". That is why it is important the addition of soft skills to curriculums in schools and training, which might significantly improve the current situation for youth as well as their overall employability, causing them to feel the ownership of having skills such as their social responsibility to learn and update their competencies (World Bank, 2018; Rosser, 2018; OECD/Asian Development Bank, 2015).

Over the past years, education has been proven to play a crucial role in the achievement of sustainable development, inasmuch as the SDGs are relevant for education, because education deals with many of the themes covered by the goals (Reddy, 2016). As a matter of fact, the SDGs can help bring political attention to a variety of issues and hence contribute to making them a reality (*ibid.*). That is why the primary hypothesis of this dissertation revolves around how providing youth with enough capacities to recognise their individual and common responsibilities might teach and educate them into becoming actively involved in the success of global sustainability. In this regard, the effort and work of AIESEC in activating youth towards the achievement of sustainable development is of major importance, and thus it constitutes a defence regarding this hypothesis.

Taking into account the aforementioned considerations, if the current Indonesian educational program is not appropriate for the majority of the previously highlighted problems in the country, especially in rural communities, then including a bottom-up teaching method will certainly engage the students in the learning process, while acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to solve daily problems. The types of activities, as emphasised in the second chapter, will help students to discover new competencies and skills while exposing them to new concepts and also realities, as well as enabling them to realise their full potential to lead a dignified life with audacity as well as confidence. That is why the second hypothesis revolves around how the work of an Indonesian community education project, where teaching methods are based in innovative activities, is able to stimulate children to recognise their full potential, see their ideas getting concrete, support the exploration of realities they never thought off as possible, help them to discover hidden talents, skills, aptitudes and passions, and encourage the children to pursue their studies, fight for their rights and never give up on their dreams.

It is worth mentioning that the above-mentioned hypothesis will be backed up by insights from an extensive literature review as well as from the experience I conducted with AIESEC in the fall of 2016 in Indonesia. The explanation of my collaboration with AIESEC would provide first-hand notions and precious details on the influence AIESEC's purpose has in both teaching

and helping young people to become sustainable leaders. The association's purposes are based on the crucial believe that youth leadership really is the fundamental solution to global erroneous trends, as well as the key to the achievement of sustainable development by 2030. The project's main purpose was centred on an educational model for children aged 6-14 living in rural areas in Jakarta, Indonesia, and was based on a bottom-up approach that aimed to increase students' knowledge and awareness by involving them into the learning process. The process incorporated hands-on learning activities such as dialogue and games, in an effort to dig into their creativity, facilitating their motivation and self-empowerment towards future studies. In this regard, I shall mention the teaching method performed while on the exchange program, analysing its results which were obtained through community dialogue.

The first part of the dissertation will feature a historical background on the origins of sustainable development, the Millennium Development Goals and the Agenda 2030 with its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. This chapter will likewise highlight the circumstances that led to the creation of the Agenda 2030 four years ago. The second part will focus a literature review on the impacts of education as a key mean in breaking the gap of inequality faced by many people worldwide in the 21st century. Furthermore, it will have a sub-section that will highlight the importance of innovative teaching models as well as the benefits of bottom-up approaches on educational settings. The impact and work of the non-profit organisation AIESEC, as an example of how to engage youth in achieving Sustainable Development, will be addressed in the third chapter. To serve this purpose, AIESEC's project Harvesting Future Leaders, namely an education project for rural children in Jakarta, Indonesia, will be exposed in the fourth chapter. Subsequently thereto, personal remarks regarding my fieldwork will be highlighted, as well as a sub-section dedicated to a general analysis and assessment of the main limitation, strengths and future suggestions vis-à-vis the implementation of the project. The following part will underline the importance of not only education, but also the relevance of both AIESEC and Harvesting Future Leaders in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Lastly, the dissertation will finish with a personal conclusion.

CHAPTER I - CREATING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES FOR ALL

1.1. Introduction

In this first chapter, a literature review will be conducted in order to understand the story of sustainable development, as well as its current implementation through the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, within a vision for a sustainable future that ensures no one will be left behind. On the basis of this review, this chapter will also introduce a critical analysis of development, while equally highlighting a comprehensive framework that shall complement the topics covered in Chapter II – Breaking the Cycle of Inequality.

1.2. Origins of Sustainable Development

As preliminary observation, if something is sustainable it means it is able to be upheld or defended; and it causes little or no damage to the environment and it can continue for a long period of time (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2013). Furthermore, sustainable development is considered the overarching paradigm of the United Nations (UN).

In 1949, a few years after the end of the Second World War and given its destructive nature as well as the nuclear age that the world had entered upon the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States President Harry S. Truman gave his inaugural speech to the nation in January of that year. Truman's inaugural address to his home country was considered as the birth of international development aid in the post-war world. In the same line, this speech proposed aid programs, calling on the United States of America to share the country's technical knowledge and scientific techniques, and to lead the effort to increase capital investment in developing countries, so that to reduce or eliminate poverty in those countries (Winterhalt, 2018). In fact, Truman stated that half of the world's population was living in conditions "approaching misery", thus there was a significant need to lift these people out of poverty. Furthermore, President Truman's idea was that with development aid in the form of economic support, transfer of knowledge and investment programs, developed countries should help developing countries achieve economic growth as well as income per capita (Kuska, n.d.). It was believed that economy and money could solve [most of] the problems of developing countries. However, the desired effects did not happen, inasmuch as there was still prevalence of poverty in the world (Winterhalt, 2018; Kuska, n.d.).

The 20th century was a century of fluctuation between optimistic and pessimistic outlooks with regard to development. First, it had been assumed that the 'misery problems' of the developing world would be solved quickly as a result of the economic support from the wealthy countries – i.e. the developed world. Nonetheless, the provision of aid in developing countries did

not prove to be a catalyser in fighting global inequalities nor the solution to it – as it was first idealized in President Truman's speech (Winterhalt, 2018; Kuska, n.d.). Second, in developing countries there was still a high level of extreme poverty. Third, in the late 1960s, books, the media publicity, films, TV programs and pop music started to spread the word about the impacts the industrial and commercial expansion have on the planet (*ibid.*). Consequently, the idea of an imminent ecological crisis was popularized. This realization led to a paradigm shift of a new notion of development: sustainable development (Jacobus, 2006).

At the end of the 1980s, the UN – driven by a series of ecological disasters that had occurred at the time, which highlighted the threat to the environment – commissioned a group of twenty-two people from not only developed countries, but also developing countries, and who formed the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) – better known as the Brundtland Commission. With a purpose of identifying long-term environmental strategies for the international community, the Brundtland Commission submitted a report, entitled as Our Common Future to the UN in 1987. This report was to be focused on the needs as well as interests of all human beings, and was equally concerned with securing a global equity for future generations by redistributing resources towards poorer nations, so that to encourage their economic growth and consequently enable all individuals to achieve their basic life needs (Jacobus, 2006).

The concept of sustainable development was henceforth first discussed as a major political goal and defined as "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (Brundtland, 1987). Accordingly, a concept with the aim of working towards a safe and stable future for the planet and people, now and in the future. As such, all sustainable development programmes must consider three spheres of sustainability: environment, society and economy. These three spheres cannot exist separately from each other, insofar as they are interconnected as well as must involve all individuals and groups of society (Edelman & Haugerud, 2005). Legitimately, the WCED contained within it two key concepts: (i) "*the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given*"; and (ii) "*the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs*" (Brundtland, 1987).

Overall, with the Brundtland Report there was a new vision that looked at humanity in its planetary context. There was a sense of shared responsibility, such as a moral foundation of [better] human rights as well as sustainable development. There was the recognition for a new economic model. Lastly, there was a growing awareness that the well-being of every community depends on the well-being of the entire planet.

1.3. From the MDGs to the SDGs

The year of 2000 was historical year with the implementation of the very first global agenda which was agreed by all members of the UN with a special focus on the world's poorest countries. It was a promise agenda that could solve many of the problems faced by human beings in areas such as poverty, education, basic sanitation, hunger and climate change (Yonsei University, n.d.; UN, 2005). This breakthrough agenda took place between 6-8 September 2000, in New York, and counted with the participation of 149 Head of Statement and Governments who, after extensive meetings and negotiations, were able to draft the Millennium Declaration: an international agenda for the beginning of the twenty-first century, with deadlines for collective actions towards the achievement of eight vital goals (Yonsei University, n.d.). These goals are known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Figure 1.1.). The MDGs not only encompassed objectives to fight poverty, but also fostered gender equality, universal primary education access as well as environmental sustainability. Moreover, they underpinned the promotion of wellbeing and human dignity, through shared cored values regarding liberty, equality, solidarity, and lastly respect for nature (UN, 2005). Most of the targets that were set were a benchmark for the time period between 2000-2015.

Figure 1.1.: The Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs were extremely important as a collaborative attack for the fight of poverty, the problems of illiteracy, hunger, discrimination against women, unsafe drinking water and a degraded environment. Moreover, the MDGs were a milestone in international cooperation, inspiring development efforts that have improved the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world. These goals represented basic human rights that every individual should be able to enjoy: freedom from poverty, access to education, good healthcare and shelter (UN, 2005). As a result, during the established time period, the world: (i) set a record number of children, including girls, attending primary school; (ii) decreased the number of maternal as well as child deaths; (iii) saved millions of people from malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis – for example, Africa cut the country's AIDS-related deaths by one-third; and (iv) rose 600 millions of people

from extreme poverty (Yonsei University, n.d.). In fact, the MDGs were a set of basic rights said to be universal. Yet, inequalities and uneven progress were still persisting with the passing of time. Consequently, the world had to redefine sustainable development for two reasons. First, the full achievement of the MDGs, as first predicted, was not entirely satisfactory. Second, the disparities have been (and still are) steadily increasing for the past years (Czech, 2015).

As a matter of fact, the MDGs left out several aspects and factors that were thought off as means to fight against global poverty, wars, political instability, discrimination and social inequality, vulnerability to natural disasters as well as corruption and rule of law (Czech, 2015). In this prism, the International community needed to do something considerably different. It was not only a matter of only fixing a few pieces in the world as the MDGs did, but also there was a concrete need to look at the bigger picture, inasmuch as something was fundamentally wrong with the way the world was being managed by state members and international organizations (Kamau, Chasek, & O'Connor, n.d.).

After months and years of conferences and reunions, on 24 December 2009, the United Nations decided to organize, in the coming year of 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at the highest possible level in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This became known as the Rio+20 Conference and its aim was to secure a renewed political paradigm on sustainable development, measure the progress of the present as well as address the latest and emerging challenges in the world (Kamau *et al.*, n.d.); and with more than 50 000 participants, 193 countries as well as 130 heads of state or government. The outcome document published by the UN was entitled as *The Future We Want*, which addressed topics such as (i) a common vision, (ii) a renew political commitment, (iii) the concept of green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, (iv) the institutional framework for sustainable development, including a framework for action as well as follow-up, and (v) the means of implementation (UNCSD, 2012). From this conference two major themes were put together. The first one concerns green economy as a renewed political commitment towards key issues of sustainable development. The second theme was about the institutional framework for sustainable development, inasmuch as many of the Rio+20 Conference participants focused on engaging as well as expanding buy-in to the process of establishing a new Sustainable Development Agenda – the Agenda 2030 – while gathering data for the conceptualisation of the goals and focusing not only on developing countries, but in the whole world, and creating a high-level entity to follow up on sustainable development as well as launch the process to define the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Yonsei University, n.d.).

Whereas the MDGs showed us that the world can work together towards a common and global good, the SDGs are set of global goals agreed between 193 countries to tackle poverty, inequality and climate change, with the aim to attain global sustainability by the end of 2030 while working together towards the achievement of the Agenda 2030. Moreover, the SDGs cover

all areas of our lives and comprise topics as no poverty, no hunger, good health, quality education, gender equality, fight injustice, as well as enhance a better life both on land and below water (UN General Assembly, 2015). Legitimately, the Preamble of '*Transforming our World: The Agenda 2030 For Sustainable Development*' asserts that *"(...) the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal agenda (...) They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, the social and environmental*"; and it shall be adapted by countries, civil society, private sector and citizens. Accordingly, the SDGs provide a holistic framework for policymaking for achieving sustainable development through the balanced progress of economic, environmental and social development (Figure 1.2.).

Figure 1.2.: The Sustainable Development Goals

Czech (2015) highlighted that the SDGs ought to "*continue the work done on the MDGs [as well as] they should become the signpoints mapping the road to achieve, even more effectively, new goals, which have a change to reduce the scale of or eliminate certain problems affecting the poorest regions of the global economy*". In fact, the MDGs first showed the world how it can mobilize investment to decrease poverty and achieve significant advances in human well-being in the world's poorest countries. Now, the SDGs' ambition is to continue the work already done by the MDGs (Czech, 2015), provided that such ambition encompasses the political will of worldwide communities to come together and critically think about the most daunting challenges shared by all humankind, because "(…) *these issues cannot be solved by states alone, but require cooperation and partnerships that involve multiple actors and that transcend borders*" (Fotabong, 2018).

One could say that "*the SDGs are a beacon of hope for people around the wor*ld" (Mohammed, 2018). They are also a set of priorities for the common good and prosperity agreed

between Heads of State and Government (HOSG). On one hand, the goals reaffirmed the importance of protecting human rights, good governance, the rule of law, transparency and accountability at all levels. On the other hand, there was a need for a more transformative agenda (Kamau et al., 2018). Indeed, an agenda that would address the new challenges faced by people around the world, and not only people living in developing countries (*ibid.*). Based on these assumptions, the goals had to be universal and likewise address not solely development, but sustainable development, aiming to go further in ending all forms of poverty, and equally paying attention to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people in the world. Indeed, an action call for the improvement of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership: the five Ps (Figure 1.3.) (Yonsei University, n.d.). According to Ban Ki-moon, the former Secretary-General of the UN, the five Ps constitute a summary of the transition to sustainable development as well as its explanation. First, because the transition to the Agenda 2030 has been placing the people at the centre of development. Secondly, because the world started to be more apprehensive and concerned about the effects of climate change and protecting our world, so that future generations will be able to "*live in an eco-friendly and healthy era*". Thirdly, because the Agenda 2030 is thought off as focusing on prosperity in equal manners, insofar as the inclusion of both developed and developing nations' states has showed the significate importance of prosperity worldwide. Fourthly, because within the SDGs there is an important and high emphasis on achieving peace through the creation of a world where all people can be educated, work as well as live a life in dignity without being affected by any conflicts or wars. Lastly, the Agenda 2030 supports a partnership that is thought off as more intensive and through than the MDGs, due to the increasing importance of the private sector in the involvement of the SDGs success and accomplishment (Yonsei University, n.d.).

Figure 1.3.: The 5 Ps

Legitimately, the Agenda 2030 adopts sustainable development as the organizing principle for global cooperation, meaning the combination of economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the lessons learned from the MDGs were powerful

and encouraging (UNSDSN, 2015), inasmuch as both the MDGs and the SDGs complement international conventions and other tools of international law by providing a globally shared normative framework that fosters collaboration across countries, mobilizes all stakeholders and inspires actions (Yonsei University, n.d.). As a result, the SDGs shall raise awareness and educate governments, business, civil society leaders, academics as well as ordinary individuals about the complex issues that must be addressed in order to reach sustainable development by 2030.

1.4. The Agenda 2030: Why so Different?

The aforementioned goals are to produce a more stable public domain that places equality and sustainability at the centred of global development efforts. Launching the SDGs and the Agenda 2030 represents to the international community and its member states an opportunity for to push forward not only the principle of universality, but also a resilient human development. According to Ban Ki-Moon, the post-2015 development agenda "*strives to reflect these lessons, build on our success and put all countries together, firmly on track towards a more prosperous, sustainable and equitable world*" (UN, 2015).

One of the most innovative aspects of the Agenda 2030 is its universality, inasmuch as the Agenda 2030 (i) recognises universal principles, standards and values; (ii) recognises that sustainable development issues are to be addresses by all countries – developed and developing – as the SDGs must be implemented and achieved everywhere; and lastly (iii) there is the commitment to leave no one behind (Natali, 2018). Furthermore, it is a transformative agenda, since it acknowledges sustainable development as a complex challenge. It is indivisible, inasmuch as it has a more integrated approach to sustainable development. It is inclusive, since it aims at leaving no one behind development. It is efficient, because it calls for new sources of funding (for example the Addis F4Dev) (*ibid.*). It is effective, as it holds governments accountable as well as it asks for a broader monitoring of frameworks by local and regional governments regarding their progress towards the achievement of sustainability: "*all of us will work to implement the Agenda within our own countries and at the regional and global levels, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities*" (United Nations, 2015).

Whereas the MDGs only focused on developing countries, the Agenda 2030 is unique because it calls action by all countries, whether they are poor or rich, to promote prosperity as well as protecting the planet for the generations to come. It is an Agenda that wants to provide effective development policies by all member states to link all parts of the world, from economy to environment, while at the same paying attention to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people (Yonsei University, n.d.).

CHAPTER II – BREAKING THE CYCLE OF INEQUALITY

2.1. Education: The Force of Change

When it comes to education, there is a broad idea that we are in the presence of a global educational crisis that affects not only the quality of education, but also the overall comprehensiveness of what may be resolved with the post-2015 development agenda (King & Palmer, 2013). In this regard, the Agenda 2030 wishes to create sustainable development futures for all human beings, while simultaneously reinforcing the concept of education as a worldwide concern, which represents both a human right and a mean to achieve the remaining goals and targets set out in the Agenda 2030 (*ibid*.). Yet, the global context of today's world is that we are still suffering from too many armed conflicts, humanitarian crisis, mass movements of refugees and displaced people, and inequality still remains alarmingly high, where disparities continue grow wider in many aspects (Mohammed, 2018). Thus, how can education break the cycle of inequality and set humanity on a path towards sustainable development that leaves no one behind?

2.1.1. The Role of Education in Sustainable Development

As previously observed, the SDGs are a catalyser for "*a comprehensive, far-reaching, and people centred set of universal and transformative goals and targets*" with an aim to achieve them globally by 2030. Nevertheless, the magnitude of the Agenda 2030 along with its seventeen goals is challenging. As stated in the previous chapter, the world has been working towards fundamental changes across the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development. In this context, there should be a re-envisioning of social-cultural values, norms as well as standards, and likewise the development of new knowledge and skills (UNESCO, 2018).

Education is believed to have a significant as well as vital role in the global effort to half climate change and set humanity on a course for sustainable development. The right of education was first enriched in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948. Then, in 1960, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the Convention Against Discrimination in Education which aims to combat any cultural, religious discrimination or any racial segregation in the field of education. With regard to this Convention, UNESCO shall promote the respect for the human rights as well as equal education opportunities for all. While "*respecting the diversity of national educational systems*", UNESCO shall, likewise, eliminate any forms of discrimination in education and promote equal treatment for all in the education sector.

With the MDGs, education was considered an indispensable mean for people to realize their capabilities and prioritize the completion of a primary school cycle. Nevertheless, the international community has yet to recognize the full potential of education as a catalyst for development. Although there has been some investment in the support for education by national governments since the implementation of the MDGs, its emphasis among donors and in many countries remains vulnerable to financial conditions (UNESCO, 2014).

The current Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay (cited in Rueckert, 2019) said, "*firstly, education is a human right, a public good, and a public responsibility. Secondly, education is the most powerful force in our hands to ensure significant improvements in health, to stimulated economic growth, to unlock the potential and innovation we need to build more resilient and sustainable societies*". According to Save the Children (n.d.), approximately 250 million children aged 5-12 are reported to have no reading nor writing skills, regardless of the fact that they are receiving schooling or not. Among these children, 57 million have encountered difficulties in attending schools. Despite progress in enrolment, more than a quarter of a billion school-aged children, adolescents, and youth are not in school. Additionally, nine percent of primary school-aged children worldwide were still out of school in 2014, albeit significant progress in primary school enrolment between 2000 and 2014 (UN, 2017).

UNESCO (2013) sheds light on a widespread crisis of providing quality education in the world, which is demonstrated through the statistics of (i) 200 million young people taking a leave from school without pragmatic skills; and (ii) 64 percent of female population among 775 million adult population is lack of fundamental reading and writing skills. An interesting statistic shown by Save the Children (n.d.) is that if all students have had basic reading skills, 171 million people would have been lifted out of poverty traps. To support this argument, UNESCO Press (2013) further explains how education can save lives of mothers who are equipped with knowledge of specific diseases in their regions, by enabling them to take preventative measures before outbreaks. It is estimated that 189 000 women can be saved on an annual level, and that mortality rate of infants can be reduced to 15 percent, if they have the change of completing primary education.

The main causes of this crisis are identifiable from the lack of funding for education (McCarthy, 2018) insufficient learning materials and inadequate learning environments, such as classrooms, school toilets and general facilities (Rueckert, 2019). Other reasons have found to be discrimination towards girls as well as children with disabilities, who often encounter both physical and psychological obstacles and hostilities in school (Rueckert, 2019; Theirworld, 2017). Another big motive under this big trend is the fact that in rural areas due to damage roads, there are a lack of infrastructures as well as long distances children often have to take in order to get to school. In fact, the magnitude of these factors is accentuated for children in rural areas than urban areas. Children living in rural areas experience serious lack of education in comparison to children

in urban areas. Consequently, according to recent estimates, "*25% of children that are of age to attend primary school in rural areas are not educated, versus 16% of children of the same age living in urban areas*" (Humanium Report, n.d.).

In 2017, the annual report on Education by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) highlighted that with the current pace of change it will take a century for poor children and adolescents to have the opportunity to develop the same skills as wealthy children. Fifteen million girls of primary school-aged are unlikely to ever have the opportunity to learn how to read and write in primary school, and about 10 million boys are also likely to miss this opportunity. UNICEF is expanding learning opportunities for marginalized adolescents, including children. Under its Strategic Plan, UNICEF has worked to improve access to a good-quality inclusive course of education for all children. It has given particular attention to the five programme areas for education of: (i) early learning; (ii) learning; (iii) equity; (iv) education in humanitarian situations; and lastly (v) education systems strengthening and partnerships that support the other four programme areas.

The importance of providing education is epitomized through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals number four (SDG 4), which wishes to achieve inclusive and quality education for all to realize lifelong learning by 2030 (Annex 2). This initiative goal is expected to be reached through safeguarding free and equitable access to early childhood, primary and secondary education. The SDG 4 advocates for the need of more inclusive and integrated learning and education policies within a lifelong learning perspective, especially targeted to vulnerable population, particularly to people with disabilities, indigenous people, refugees and rural children (UN, 2017).

2.1.2. The Importance of Education for All

The quest for the quality of life and what 'modern' education can offer is at the centre of new hopes and opportunities to poor and materially deprived societies. With the right type of education, a developing society can attain the satisfaction, harmony and comprehension that may elude a more prosperous community. In this regard, education is rooted in the integration of learning activities for people of all ages without any race or gender discrimination, in all life-wide contexts (for example, school, family, community, workplace, etc.), and through a variety of modalities (such as formal, non-formal and informal education) which together meet a range of learning needs and demands (UIL, n.d.).

The relevance of learning and being educated has been strengthened in today's increasingly interconnected and fast-changing world. The exponential and fast growth in the digital age, the demographic shifts and increased mobility, as well as the growing concern for unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, are underlying the relevance of lifelong

learning as the intangible framework and organizing principle of all forms of education in the current century (UIL 2010, cited in UIL, n.d.). As such, providing equal access to learning opportunities is an indispensable condition for realising the right to Education for All (EFA), inasmuch as EFA is seen as a key mean to counterbalance initial and recurring social disparities, as well as to place the empowerment of learners at the centre (UNESCO, 2015). Nonetheless, one should bear in mind that building a lifelong learning framework is not as simple as it may seem. This is because it challenges strongly held and traditional views of how education and learning should be organised, as well as established practices, and both institutional and political power (UIL, n.d.). Consequently, building a new and lasting learning systems is a perpetual effort (*ibid.*).

In March 1990, the global agenda for Education for All was launched in Jomtien, Thailand. Both the *World Declaration on Education for All* and its companion *Framework for Action to meet basic learning needs* were adopted and have proved to be useful guides for governments, international organizations, educators and development professionals in designing and carrying out policies and strategies to improve and deliver basic education services. It was stated in the aforementioned Declaration that "*basic education is more than an end in itself. It is the foundation for lifelong learning and human development on which countries may build, systematically, further levels and types of education and training*". Nevertheless, in order to serve the basic needs of all people, it is required not only a recommitment to basic education, but also an 'expanded vision' which is able to surpass institutional structures, curricula as well as conventional delivery systems (UNESCO, 1990). Through this prism, this 'expanded vision' must encompass five key points (*ibid.*). The first one concerns the universalizing access and promotion of equity, in which an active commitment must be made so that to remove education disparities and any obstacle that hampers the active participation of girls and women, inasmuch as basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults despite their origin, race or gender (UNESCO, 1990).

The second point focuses on learning, meaning that it is necessary to focus on the actual learning acquisition as well as outcome, and to define and apply systems of assessing learning achievement, rather than exclusively upon school enrolment. The main point thereto is to assess whether people truly learn as a result of these prospects, and if they absorb useful knowledge, reasoning capacity, as well as values and skills (UNESCO, 1990).

The third point suggests lifelong learning opportunities and likewise broadening the means and scope of basic education, embracing that (i) learning begins at birth; (ii) primary education must be universal, insofar as it is the main delivery system for the basic education of children; (iii) literacy is a vital skill and the basis for the establishment of other life abilities; (iv) the basic learning needs of youth and adults are diverse which must be addressed through, for example, formal and non-formal education programmes in health, environment, technology, science, and other societal, economic and political issues; (v) in order to convey essential

knowledge and educate people on a broad range of life issues there should be made available all instruments as well as channels of information and communication such as television, radio, libraries and other media, in addition to the traditional means of education (UNESCO, 1990).

The fourth point is about enhancing the environment for learning, i.e. in order for learners to receive as well as participate actively in and benefit from education, societies must ensure that the learning environment is integrated into community learning for not only children, but also adults, inasmuch as the education of children as well as their parents is mutually supportive, due to the fact that families can play an important and encouraging role in the education of their children (UNESCO, 1990).

The fifth and last point is the elaboration and strengthening of partnerships. Despite the provision of basic education for all is in the hands of national, regional and local authorities, they cannot be expected to fully supply financial support to every human being. Therefore, the delivery of basic education for all depends upon new and revitalized partnerships, supportive policies and reforms on the education system, as well as political commitment with appropriate and adequate financial measures (UNESCO, 1990).

Implementing this ambitious agenda was a challenge also adopted by the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. At the completion of the Agenda 2015 the report of the World Education Forum (WEF) showed that around 58 million children and 70 million adolescents in the world were out of school, and one in six children in low- and middle-income countries would drop out of school before even completing primary education. It was estimated that 130 million children were still not able to read, write or count adequately, albeit having completed at least four years of schooling (World Education Forum, 2015). Consequently, poor quality of education is more likely to lead to insufficient levels of basic skills acquisition, even for those who attend school. Moreover, inequality in the access to education was [and still is] increasing, in which the poorest and most disadvantaged children are less likely to attend school and acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills (*ibid*.). Indeed, the WEF 2015 stated that in many countries there are persistent and widening inequalities in access to education as well as learning outcomes. Therefore, with the recognition that the world was far from reaching education for all, the WEF 2015 reshaped the global agenda for education within the framework of the SDGs. This new proposed education agenda is well defined in the *Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All* (henceforth stated as solely Incheon Declaration).

The Incheon Declaration proposes more ambitious targets while it recognizes the persistent challenges in equitable access to quality basic education; as well as reaffirms that "*education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights*". Moreover, it is a progressive agenda with a vision to achieve universal education by 2030. This holistic and aspiring vision is well captured by the aforementioned SDG

number four and its corresponding targets, consequently recognising the important role of education as a main driver of development. In this context, the Incheon Declaration aims at mobilizing all countries and partners around the SDG number four by proposing means of implementing, coordinating, financing and monitoring both the goals and targets, so that to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, as well as lifelong learning opportunities for all (World Education Forum, 2015). Additionally, it proposes strategies that countries may wish to draw upon in developing contextualised plans and strategies, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development, respecting national policies and priorities (*ibid*.).

2.1.3. The Importance of Quality Education

If we want to live in a world as well as build one where there is no poverty and where there is the capacity to combat climate impacts and foster not only peace, but also tolerance so that to put an end on terrorism, wars and conflicts, it is inevitable not to think that all of these will be successful if we do not consider education as a fundamental asset to help people communicate and live peacefully within countries.

Following UNESCO's Policy Brief '*Education for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Learning to Act, Learning to Achiever*' (2018), education is perceived as a vehicle for human development, insofar as increased educational attainment has positive correlations with poverty reduction, economic growth, health improvements and reductions in child mortality rates. For example, 1 in 4 children suffers from severe malnutrition which affects their brain as well as the ability to learn, but educated parents are able to apply propriate health and hygiene practices. Another good example is the fact that around 40% of all under-five children deaths occur within the first twenty-eight days of life due to complications during delivery, however an educated mother is more likely to give birth in the presence of a skilled birth attendant or ensure that their children are vaccinated (UNESCO, 2014).

When people are able to get quality education they can break from the cycle of poverty, and therefore improve economic growth: "*the increasing emphasis on the role in economic growth of people's knowledge and skills, or 'human capital', has helped make education and training more central to the concerns of governments*" (cited in Lauwerier, 2018). Education helps to reduce inequalities and to reach gender equality, inasmuch as it can empower women to overcome several forms of discrimination, can boost women's confidence and perception of their freedom, provided that they can make more informed choices about their lives (Lauwerier, 2018). Education likewise contributes to more peaceful societies, social cohesion as well as active citizenship: "*all citizens through learning become more effective participants in democratic, civil and economic processes*" (cited in Lauwerier, 2018). Although enrolment in primary school in

developing countries has reached 91%, 57 million children still remain out of school, there are still children today who are not learning due to poor quality education. In this scenario, quality education as emphasised out by SDG number four is of major importance as it stresses the need for inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all, but also because education is the key that shall allow many other SDGs to be achieved (Lauwerier, 2018).

Good quality education is beneficial to countries, and it entails efficiency gains for both societies and governments. According to Sreekanthachari & Nagaraja (2013), quality education can generate multiple positive effects, through which it has influenced on the development of rural individuals, families, communities, and societies. Such an education leads to poverty reduction and controlled unemployment rate. Moreover, functions of quality education encompass imparting social change, facilitating rural people awareness of their rights, improving standards of living, offering job opportunities (Sreekanthachari & Nagaraja, 2013). They go on listing a number of improvements a basic rural education can deliver, such as employability, increased rate of literacy, poverty reduction and disease containment (*ibid.*). However, access to education is essential, but not sufficient condition for education to have positive development outcomes worldwide, i.e. at a global level, albeit education has helped narrow down income inequality, by reducing poverty, and likewise has helped women to overcome forms of gender discrimination, consequently they can now make more informed choices about their lives (UNESCO, 2014).

As understandable, education is an indispensable element that can facilitate transforming children's lives by assisting them to overcome their circumstantial constraints and poverty. Meeting the basic educational needs not only promotes changes of better health and employment thresholds, but also engenders changes of going up social ladders while escaping poverty traps to realize their human potentials. For instance, the future of our planet as well as ourselves depends on both the context as well as opportunities children are exposed to since the early stages of their lives. Each generation must care for the ones that are yet to come, with special attention to children and youth, whose growing skills and knowledge will be fundamental in shaping a world where fairness, equality and freedom will not be the exception but the norm.

Overall, there is a certain belief and need to defend education as one of the approaches that we all shall pursue in order to combat the different challenges that hinder as well as threaten the social, economic and human development of so many societies, such as inequality, exclusion, poverty, unemployment and lack of information. That is why, the following sub-part of this chapter will focus on the development of plans and actions in the 21st century that shall harness education as a powerful mean of setting humanity on a course towards a more prosperous and sustainable futures for all.

2.2. Education in the 21st Century

Nowadays, it is not only sufficient to talk about EFA and quality education, but also to address and think about education's role in global development, as well as its impact on the well-being of individuals. Whereas EFA contributes to the promotion of quality lifelong opportunities in any education setting and at all levels of education for all people in the world, either they are rich, poor, men, women, disable or not disable, Development Education (DE), more precisely Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and Global Education (GE) contribute to a new vision of sustainable global development education interventions in the 21st century. They take on the role of strengthening and empowering learners with enough abilities, skills and human values related with sustainable-related issues which shall lead them towards a path of becoming future sustainable change-makers in order to take responsible actions to create a more sustainable world. All of the three abovementioned education interventions promote global justice and a prosperous future for past and present generations. While sharing some common grounds, it is important to highlight some of their differences. These interventions have been brought up together to serve the purpose of addressing the impacts of learning in the 21st century, as well as to relate and provide a brief literature introduction to the purposes and objectives of AIESEC in empowering learners to take well informed decisions for a more prosperous future, which will be underlined in more detail in Chapter IV – Educating Youth Towards Sustainable Development.

2.2.1. From Development Education to Education for Sustainable Development

For the past decades, Development Education (DE) has been at the centre of a number of interpretations, influenced by practices of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as policy makers (Bourn, 2014). Its interpretations range from global awareness in order to learn about global as well as developing issues to a framework for broader learning which has an active component (*ibid.*). But before comparing opinions on DE, it is necessary to understand what development is. For Bourn (2014) development is "*a change process over time, most frequently considered as positive*", whereas for the UN Documentation Research Guide (n.d.), development is a "*multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development*".

When it comes to DE, its concept originally emerged in the 1970s within a framework of initiatives in order to raise public awareness, understanding as well as support for international development (Bourn, 2014). Cochran-Smith (1999) acknowledged that "*social responsibility, social change, and social justice*" are the education's main three goals (cited in O'Flaherty & Liddy, 2018). Nevertheless, Noddings (1997) proposes that a "*morally defensible aim for*

education should be to encourage the growth of competent, caring, loving, and lovable people"
(cited in O'Flaherty & Liddy, 2018).

In the same line, Douglas Bourn, in his research paper '*The Theory and Practice of Global Learning*' (2014), centred pedagogy for global social justice in four main elements: (i) a sense of a global approach; (ii) recognition of power as well as inequality in the world; (iii) a belief in equity as well as social justice; (iv) a commitment to both reflection and dialogue. Briefly, a global perspective will draw students into debates about their sense of identity and where they fit in the world, and this is highly related with a teaching method that "*recognises the value of social justice, international solidarity, and a sense of global responsibility*". On one side, the recognition of power and inequality is based on the understanding of complexities of globalisation – such as economic, social and cultural forces – as well as moving far beyond the concept that a globalised society is simply the development of more flexible competencies and intercultural understanding. On another, a belief in social justice it is meant as the recognition of concern about global issues, in which, most of the time, this perception is subjective to one's personal experience, family, group of friends, and even religion; thus it generates a desire for a more just world as well as personal values based on passion, understanding and empathy. Lastly, development education has been encouraging students to critical thinking, dialogue and discussion related to existing views about the world, whereas thinking critically and discussing different ideas and points of views often engages students on reflecting as well as analysing their own viewpoints, thus engaging in dialogue to first listen and only then question other people's points of view with respect (Bourn, 2014).

Based on the aforementioned assumptions, DE is likewise an approach which promotes and creates awareness as well as understanding of rapidly changing contexts. In this sense, the Development Awareness Raising and Education (DARE), (as cited in Bourn, 2014) defines development education as a method that "*fosters the full participation for all citizens in influencing more just and sustainable economic, social, environmental, and human rights based national and international policies*". In a more broad and general contextualisation, the Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017-2023 states that DE is "*an educational model process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship and participation. It is about supporting people in understanding, and in acting to transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives and the lives of others at personal, community national and international levels*". As a matter of fact, these two definitions underline some key elements (Irish Aid, n.d.).

The first one concerns building student's awareness and knowledge regarding global trends, helping them to critically explore and assess how these trends are interlinked with their everyday lives, inasmuch as informed individuals address better complex, economic,

environmental as well as social matters related to development (Irish Aid, n.d.). Through this prism, DE contributes to knowledge and understanding, inasmuch as it explores economic, political, social, cultural and environmental global power inequalities (*ibid.*). Secondly, DE engages students to reflect upon different perspectives, by questioning different biases as well as points of views, reflecting on the root causes and consequences of global trends, such as poverty, global hunger, inequality, climate change, and so on and forth (Irish Aid, n.d.; O'Flaherty & Liddy, 2018). Following McCloskey (2016), development education equips as well as prepares students with enough perspectives and reasoning to critically engage with local and global issues through the usage of creative as well as participative methods; thus, developing solution-oriented skills, as creative and critical thinking, empowerment and decision-making, which combined are considered key features to a sustainable future. Thirdly, DE is strictly correlated with solidarity, insofar as it supports individuals to fully realise their potential, rights as well as responsibilities as citizens; consequently developing the required knowledge, competencies, aptitudes, skills and values necessary to become active as well as participative global citizens who advocate for a change in the world (Irish Aid, n.d.). Through this prism, the last and fourth key element is the fact that Development Education promotes action, because DE allows individuals to make sound connections between ongoing global challenges and their daily lives and routines, which in a way empowers those individuals with enough qualities and capacities to make a positive difference in our planet (*ibid.*).

Whereas DE is an educational process that increases global awareness on global issues interconnected to the unequal and bias world we currently live in, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is that, but also a much more well-established education intervention to sustainable development: "*ESD is about much more than preaching and teaching on sustainable development. It is also about practicing sustainable development. Sustainable learning environments (…) allow educators and learners alike to integrate sustainability principles into their daily practice*" (UNESCO, 2014).

In 2005, the UN decade of ESD enhanced the role of education in promoting sustainable development. As a result, there has been a growing international recognition that ESD goes hand-in-hand with lifelong learning and it is an integral part of quality education, inasmuch as it is a key enabler towards sustainable development (UNESCO, 2014). The ESD dimensions go from (i) learning content – meaning the integration of critical issues such as climate change; (ii) pedagogy and learning environments – meaning the need to design teaching as well as learning in an interactive, leaner-centred way that enables exploratory, action-oriented and transformative learning, in order to inspire learners to act for sustainability; to (iii) learning outcomes – meaning the need to stimulate and promote the development of core competencies: critical thinking, collaborative decision-making as well as taking responsibility for present and future generations; and to (iv) societal transformation, which means the empowerment of all learners regardless of

age or gender, in any education setting, so that to transform their lives and the society they live in (UNESCO, 2014).

In 2015, when the SDGs were launched, a goal centred on learners gaining the necessary knowledge as well as skills to promote sustainable development was set (UNESCO, 2015). ESD is therefore explicitly recognised in the SDGs, more precisely in SDG number four, Target 4.7 that stipulates by 2030 we must ensure that all world learners "*acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development*" (UN Agenda 2030, 2015). Moreover, ESD is also an important enabler in the contribution to the achievement of the remaining sixteen SDGs, inasmuch as ESD empowers individuals to change their social, economic and political behaviour which leads to the promotion of sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017).

Indeed, the SDGs advocate that all learners shall acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development by 2030, and the inclusion of international development topics in DE and ESD aims to emphasise the biases, injustices, discriminations and inequalities existent across the world, as well as to encourage action for more global social justice (O'Flaherty & Liddy, 2018).

2.2.2. Raising Awareness Through Global Education

Irina Bokova, the former Director-General of UNESCO, says that education and knowledge are common goods and it should help individuals to reach their full potential in life, inasmuch as in a world that is yet to be build where different forms of inequality, armed conflicts and wars still persist, it is up to each generation to work out new forms for educational and social adaptation in an ever-changing world. It is not enough to set targets that may help the achievement of the SDG number four, insofar as we must also address the core determinants that defend a certain level of education for all people. Realising how important is education will require a new vision as well as an emphasis on critical thinking in formal education that should be built on awareness raising of what is happening nowadays.

However, a "*change in education is easy to propose, hard to implement, and extraordinary difficult to sustain*" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). That is why global awareness should constitute a central feature to all individuals. According to Van de Boom & Zuylen (2016), global orientation is held important because it creates appreciation and understanding of fundamental values and principles of the human being's shared responsibility to solve many of the global difficulties. Furthermore, Johannes Krause (2016) bases his understanding of Global Education (GE) on the Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) study, while

highlighting that it (i) enhances one's understanding of the globalised world; (ii) facilitates participatory and transformative learning processes; (iii) develops competencies as well as aptitudes for critical thinking and self-reflection; (iv) is value-based and has both an ethical foundation and various purposes; (v) supports active and participative engagement.

For the Association of German Development and Aid NGOs (VENRO), GE adopts a link between getting information, raising awareness and acting, inasmuch as its educational goal is to "*strengthening self-determined learning and the capability to shape world society: it is the objective of global education to support people in recognising globality, in using their capabilities and opportunities in order to orientate themselves within social and economic development, as well as in orientating both individual and social ways to lead a life with open and reflective values. Global education aims to support both individual and collective competence to act in the name of worldwide solidarity*" (cited in Scheunpflug & Asbrand, 2006). That is why what matters for GE is not only the problems that happen on developing countries, but also the fact that those same problems should be integrated into a global perspective as well as understanding of the interconnections of the direct local actions within a global context (Scheunpflug & Asbrand, 2006).

Global education follows a model that is oriented towards the future. Johannes Krause (2016) argues that GE uses an educational approach that is centred on the development of diverse student's capabilities and abilities to understand the societies from today's globalised world, thus leading individuals to act in a responsible as well as conscientious manner. In this regard, VENRO defines GE as "*the model of human development and social justice; (…) and the solidarity for those who suffer under the globalisation process*" (cited in Scheunpflug & Asbrand, 2006).

Based on these assumptions, the Global Education Network Europe (GENE), in its publication '*Global Education Innovation Award*' (2017), states that "*global education contributes to a change in perspectives, attitudes and behaviour among children, young people, students, educators, teachers, parents, as well as decision-makers and other actors in society*". The main features and goals thereto are to educate individuals about current world problems through the development of competencies that range from critical thinking to empathy, hard work and compassion, people can achieve great results; because sometimes we, as mere human beings, do not perceive the real needs of communities having other wants and urgencies with respect to the ones we, on the other side of the world, prioritise (GENE, 2018).

Over the past years, many educational institutions have been trying to address issues and educate their students about global problems, such as poverty, migration, human rights violations, inequalities, climate change and social exclusion, thus enabling a learning that opens students' minds to new cultures and viewpoints, behaviours as well as habits, while pushing them to acknowledge and accept diversities and likewise challenges, which forces them to grow into future sustainable citizens. Having said this, global education "*opens people's eyes and minds to*

realities of the world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all" (GENE, n.d.); and this has led to a variety of global new innovative initiatives and perspectives regarding education systems worldwide, and its respective teaching methods.

2.3. Innovative Ways in Education Towards Sustainable Development

2.3.1. Introduction

Once having examined and highlighted the main benefits of Education, including the role of three different types of educational interventions, this part of the dissertation will explore the aspects of innovative teaching methods towards sustainable development, in order to assess how the Harvesting Future Leaders educational project has facilitated the provision of quality as well as lifelong learning opportunities for rural children in Jakarta, Indonesia; and how an innovative teaching approach has helped the HFL children see the world with different eyes by opening up their minds to new viewpoints and cultures, behaviours and habits, while equally pushing them to embrace and accept new challenges related with Sustainable Development as per ESD.

2.3.2. Innovation and Education

Legitimately, according to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the English word '*innovation*' comes from the Latin word '*innovationem*' which means to make something new. Simmonds (1986) argues that innovation is a set of new ideas that may be used in existing products and services, or in new methods, new products and new services. While the Oslo Manual (cited in OECD, 2016) has identified four different types of innovation: (i) product innovation – meaning the introduction of new services or products; (ii) process innovation – meaning the implementation of new or significantly improved production or delivery method, including the improvement of changes in software, equipment or techniques; (iii) marketing innovation – meaning the implementation of new marketing methods that involve significant changes in product design; (iv) organisational innovation – meaning the implementation of new organisational methods in different workplaces environment; innovation is not something that can only be implemented in the private sector, but it can, and it should also be, implemented in the public sector, namely in the educational one.

Redding, Twyman & Murphy (2013), Mykhailyshyn, Kondur & Serman (2018), as well as OECD (2016) elaborate on how innovation in education is crucial for the achievement of a fully developed and fair post-industrial society, as well as it is seen as a key element in maintaining economic competitiveness, acting as a mechanism to enhance an organisation's

capability to adapt to changing environments. Moreover, Mykhailyshyn et al. (2018) argue that innovation is about quality education, the development of new approaches to increase the effectiveness of education value, as well as the adaptation of science, social life and industrial areas into worldwide education institutions: "*limits of growth of modern civilisation are determined by education, its quality and accessibility. In conditions of growing dynamics of social and economic transformation practice requires the working out of the new forms for educational and social adaptation, optimisation of the interests of the state and the individuality in the society of knowledge that appears daily*" (Mykhailyshyn et al., 2018).

In the OECD report '*Innovating Education and Educating for Innovation*' (2016), innovation in education is defined as the form of a new products such as new syllabus, textbooks, resources, new processes to deliver education services such as e-learning, new ways of organizing activities such as flipped classroom and new marketing technique such as new courses. In a same line of thought, Fullan (2007) believes that innovation in education should include new revised materials, new teaching methods as well as a change of beliefs and assumptions in what constitutes 'traditional teaching'. In this regard, innovation in the education sector should help the development of students' creative thinking, new ideas, and essential skills, as well as it should promote communication skills, broaden of perspectives and the work out of new solutions to different problems, while questioning existing knowledge (Fullan, 2007). Similarly, basing on several philosophers and sociologists' opinions, Mykhailyshyn et al. (2018) stated that innovation in education is a mere process of an education method with an aim at increasing and stimulating student's both creative skills as well as self-learning skills.

When it comes to innovation in educational systems, this approach differs from the EFA and the ESD, inasmuch as it offers much more than just teaching students how to transform their lives in order to lead them to a more sustainable world. Accordingly, it is seen as a driver of change for advancing education quality, and it also helps to transform students' behaviours and raise awareness. Innovation in education include new teaching as well as bottom-up approaches through dialogue, hands-on learning activities and challenge-based learning activities. Such a model can increase students' engagement, curiosity and desire to learn, which fosters collaborative and reflective learning environment to come up with their own ideas and solutions (Johnson, Smith, Smythe & Varon, 2009; Apple Classroom Guide, 2010). Thus, there is an understanding on how to 'approach life' rather than just theory or how to pass exams, since it pushes students to learn by themselves by increasing their curiosity, creativity and critical thinking, while not only helping increasing students' interest, but also encouraging them to a higher level of thinking.

2.3.3. Traditional Ideas of Teaching Vs New Approaches to Education

When focusing on the difference between traditional learning methods and innovative learning methods, Barrado (2016) criticizes the former by emphasising how they lead students to take passive roles in classrooms, since teachers are "*responsible for transferring the knowledge and content of the course to their students*", whereas students are only expected to be the receivers of information, consequently causing limitations, such as lack of motivation, one-way communication as well as limited intervention of the students in a class discussion. Accordingly, this traditional learning method is failing to engage students at learning, inasmuch as it forces them to just memorize theory, concepts as well as information they are taught, rather than getting practical information and real-life experiences (Barrado, 2016). As a matter of fact, the World Bank (2013) tells us that learning happens best when instruction is personalized to meet the needs and strengths of each child, when individual progress is tracked, and when prompt feedback is provided. Delivered well education benefits both individuals and the country. For individuals, education raises self-esteem, causes women to have a voice, furthers opportunities for employment and raises one's income. For a country, it helps strengthen institutions within societies, drives long-term economic growth, reduces poverty and inequalities, and stimulates social innovation (World Bank, 2003).

Following Andrew Stables (cited in Scott, 2018), school students are only ever likely to grasp a broad and general sense of concern on world's problems through the practice in realistic contexts. To him, the curricula in schools should be based on a student-centred educational model that fosters the development of skills such as critical thinking, debates, discussions as well as dialogue. In emphasising this role for schools worldwide, Andrew Stable privileges the development of skills and abilities above content. Moreover, Andrew Stables stresses how important is the participation in decision-making on one's daily life choices. Legitimately, the OECD report '*Innovative Schools: Teaching & Learning in the Digital Era*' (2015) argues that new education systems should focus on knowledge creation rather than memorizing of information. Student engagement is hence a fundamental factor for innovative learning methods. In fact, this student engagement increases interest, curiosity, optimism, passion and above all student's attention in the learning process, thus showing some progress in their learning outcomes, inasmuch as students who pay more attention and likewise are more engaged with the work performed, tend to express more interest during class and consequently enjoy it more (Kalyani and Rajasekaran, 2018).

As a matter of fact, schools command the initial education of young people, inasmuch as stimulating student's cognitive development early has large positive effects on children's future trajectories (Scott, 2018). Moreover, schools have the responsibility to nurture critical thinking about what might constitute appropriate future, as well as in helping students to develop, in an

early stage of their lives, adequate skills and competencies for their future prospects (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, Barrado (2016) refutes the traditional education system by stating that classes where students spend half of their time on learning concepts and theories are merely useful to engage students on making a connection between theory and practice by following the traditional standards, whereas they do not feel empowered to achieve their own goals without sacrificing their integrity in order to conform to the norms of rigid education institutions (Brailas, Koskinas & Alexias, 2017). Following Osberg (2005), traditional educational is understood as a planned enculturation process, aiming to drive students from a known starting point to a known final one: "*educational environments are designed specially to move a person – intellectually – from point A to point B. To do this we must know what the starting point is and what the finishing point is. For example, to produce creative people, or politically responsible people we must first of all know the nature of the human subjects we are dealing with. Second, we must know what it means to be creative or politically responsible. Then we must have a plan or method to move A to B*" (cited in Brailas et al., 2017).

In relation to the achievement of the SDGs, Scott (2018) asserts that schools should (i) help students understand why the 17 sustainable development goals are thought off as a fundamental concern; (ii) enable students to gain diverse perspectives, from different viewpoints, in order to develop abilities to make sound choices in the near future; (iii) provide opportunities for an active as well as critical exploration of issues; and lastly (iv) encourage students to critically come to their own viewpoints. In this prism, education is seen as "liberal" since it prioritises student learning over traditional learning, thus broadening the learning outcome of the students (Scott, 2018). In a hopeful thought, schools should be a support for students to explore the SDGs, provided that it enhances social justice, saves energy, creates less waste, promotes biodiversity, and so on and so forth (*ibid.*).

Moreover, the method of learning that will be needed if the world wishes to achieve the SDGs, it will not just be what goes on in schools, or universities – even though those institutions constitute a foundation for further the studies or gaining an employment -, but also the learning that happens daily and in places where initiatives related to the achievement of sustainable development are planned, developed, monitored and put into practice (Scott, 2018). Frequently this is the type of learning that is not considered to be learning at all, albeit it is (*ibid.*).

2.3.4. Benefits of a Bottom-up Approach

Based on the aforementioned, it is worth knowing how important and necessary innovation is in an educational context. Kalyani & Rajasekaran (2018), Barrado (2016) and Mykhailyshyn et al. (2018) affirmed that a bottom-up approach in an educational environment helps students reach their full potential in life. On one hand, Attard, Di Iorio, Geven & Santa (n.d.) highlighted that

bottom-up approaches increase accountability, responsibility and student's autonomy as well as ownership over their learning outcomes, in which the teacher's role should merely be as a mediator facilitating the dialogue between teacher and students; further clarifying that teachers should not give the answers to the students, but help them work out and reach a final answer through the development of necessary skills, such as problem solving and critical thinking. Furthermore, Brailas et al. (2017) indicated that the student's role in a classroom is to actively engage and participate in the activities in a fruitful learning environment. On another perspective, Ram, Ram & Sprague (2007) (cited in Barrado, 2016) mention the importance of problem-based learning. Accordingly, problem-based learning drives students to acquire knowledge by themselves, consequently increasing their curiosity, critical thinking as well as creativity, by integrating theory with practice (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, Mykhailyshyn et al. (2018) underline that innovative educational teaching methods include the use of, above all, practical activities, didactic games, different tasks related to different abilities, as well as independent knowledge search from the students. In the same line of thought, O'Neil and Mcmahon (2005) suggest the introduction of activities such as independent projects, group discussions, peer monitoring, learning journals, quizzes, role plays, didactic games and posters to implement bottom-up teaching methods. In this context, teachers should take the role of facilitators in innovative bottom-up education rather than merely presenting theories as well as concepts, insofar as this will help students to find their own solution methods to eventually deal with real-life problems in the near future (Muianga, Klomsri, Tedre & Mutimucuio, 2018; Kalyani & Rajasekaran, 2018).

Nevertheless, in a bottom-up approach a cultural shift in the educational environment is required, because most students are not familiar with the psychological consequence of undertaking the core responsibility for their independent learning (Barrado, 2016). In this regard, the most important role a teacher has is to inspire learning as well as to create a fruitful and positive environment (Brailas et al., 2017). However, innovative teaching is a requirement for the teachers in order to meet basic educational needs of the newest generations (Kalyani & Rajasekaran, 2018). Through this prism, innovative teaching methods are required not only for present generations, but also for generations to come, thus helping and giving new opportunities to students to reach their full potential in life (*ibid.*).

2.3.5. Social Pedagogy in Education

In the context of the study presented in this dissertation, a bottom-up approach can have significant impacts in the cognitive development of children, inasmuch as this method wishes to contribute to the development of competencies and skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, decision making, cognitive flexibility, problem solving and cooperation skills (World Economic

Forum, 2016). Such approach is grounded on social pedagogy which is centred around the challenges faced by the community itself, by valuing the potential of the children, their knowledge and experience, which would give them the necessary means to understand global problems, while forming active children capable of thinking critically as well as gaining a new outlook of self-confidence in life (ThemPra Social Pedagogy, 2015).

Social pedagogy is referred to as a service delivery mechanism, which is used in different human development projects that involve diverse clients, such as children, young people, multicultural communities, people with physical and mental health issues, elderly, and so on and so forth (Hatton, 2013). Its essence lies on facilitating well-being, the potential of individuals to bring change into the world, and understanding of people's culture, hence fostering human relationships that boost the respect of human dignity, the achievement of human rights, and opportunities for any individual to actively participate in society, communicate what they are concerned about while expressing their own points of view and listening to those of others (ThemPra Social Pedagogy, 2015). In this regard, social pedagogy is inspired by humanistic beliefs with the purpose to thwart social problems and inequality through the underpinning idea that every human being is born with an innate ability that can bring about significant changes to their communities (*ibid.*).

When it comes to the concepts of social pedagogy, Lev Vygotsky acknowledges that the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) embodies the importance of learning together with other individuals, by explaining that an individual is more likely to complete any task when he/she is integrated in a collaborative group learning environment. Moreover, he defines ZDP as "*the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers*" (cited in McLeod, 2012). Within a same line of reasoning, Schwartz (2001) highlights four scenarios in supporting children in the beginning stage of learning starting from (i) children's self-initiated motivation to learn where they are interested to find out new things; (ii) where the children are at, from which professionals are able to make assessment of suitable learning contents through dialogue, observation, and reflection; (iii) mutual learning with others, where both the children and professionals are learning something new together; and lastly (iv) development perspective, which ensures that skills as well as talents are sufficiently harnessed to lead a life in dignity (cited in The Therapeutic Care Journal, 2009).

Grant and Osanloo (2014) state that the background research and theoretical framework are "*the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and literally) for a research study. It serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the significance and the research questions*". Social pedagogy represents, therefore, the essence and enlargement of the set of opportunities an individual has, as well as it represents the various combinations of abilities that an individual can achieve in order to lead a

life, one has reason to value. In this regard, education is particularly important for developing people's potential, through the support of transformative learning and innovation so that to acquire relevant skills to bring about fundamental change in the world. That is why, not only a bottom-up approach, but also social pedagogy integrated in an educational setting are suitable theoretical basis for the scope of the study hereby presented. As such, this framework is fundamental to outline a better comprehension and understanding of the real dynamics of the Harvesting Future Leaders community educational intervention as it seeks to build an educational model for rural children, by focusing on hands-on learning and challenge-based activities in order to contribute to the development of Harvesting Future Leaders' children's future skills.

CHAPTER III – EDUCATING YOUTH TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapters of the dissertation relied on a detailed explanation of why I chose this topic. In the Introduction, it was highlighted the two hypotheses in which the first one is based on the work of AIESEC in providing youth with enough capabilities to recognise their full individual and common responsibilities. Therefore, the following chapter will grasp the true effect of the non-profit youth run organisation in educating future sustainable leaders who can contribute to the Agenda 2030, while equally harnessing education as a powerful mean of the Agenda's implementation towards the advancement of sustainable development.

3.2. History of AIESEC

The Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales, commonly known simply by its acronym: AIESEC, was founded in 1948, after the World War II, in seven European countries by a group of students from France, Sweden and Germany (AIESEC International, 2008; AIESEC International, 2019). The idea of building the organisation first emerged when the aforementioned group of students, who would exchange information about each universities' school programs through letters, were interested in doing exchange programs between the universities; and thus equally fostering international understanding among students by building on their personal connections with people from different cultures, as a mean to promote international reconciliation and understanding at the end of the Second World War (AIESEC International, 2019). In its early years, the organisation's activities were mainly exchange traineeships between European Universities. And by the 1950s, AIESEC had already doubled its exchange programs to both America and Africa (AIESEC International, 2008).

In 1961, AIESEC was part of an International Compendium where it asserted that it is "*an independent non-political, international student organisation, which has as its purpose, to establish and promote close and friendly relations between members without regard to religion or race*" (AIESEC International, 2008). In fact, a purpose that has not changed for the past years. In 1966, it was held in Lausanne, Switzerland, the first conference themed '*Education for International Business*' and it was related with topics and issues AIESEC was concerned at the time, supporting a need for awareness raising towards global matters (*ibid.*). With this conference, International Theme Programs (ITP) became a formal part of AIESEC under which projects were offer independently in national, local and regional level so that students would be able to gain

awareness of a fast-changing world through their engagement with businesspeople, the academia and the community (AIESEC International, 2008).

The 1980s were trouble times for AIESEC as the organisation's importance was being questioned. At that time, the then president, Athos M. Staub, asserted that AIESEC was only involved in organising international seminars and sending students to foreigner countries. Additionally, this was not enough to cause an impact within a society (AIESEC International, 2008). Consequently, Staub viewed this regression as a wakening call for AIESEC to start contributing to world challenges, and thus become a change actor. Subsequently in 1988, the non-profit organisation introduced the AIESEC Global Seminar Series (GSS). The purpose of this seminars was to gather students' opinions as well as concerns on several world problems related to sustainable development, and then teach them how to be world leaders who would be able to cause a great impact in worldwide societies (AIESEC International, 2008; AIESEC International, 2019). Furthermore, in the late 1980s, both the ITP and AGSS merged into the Global Theme Program (GTP), which had a very similar role and objective as the AGSS, rather that the GTP had a more proactive approach when compared to ITP and AGSS, inasmuch as it shows AIESEC's desire to create a more prominent influence and impact on worldwide communities (*ibid.*).

By the beginning of 1990, AIESEC had started to gain recognition for its work and joined some important world summits such as the United National Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992), the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen (1995), and the World Habitat II Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey in 1996 (AIESEC International, 2008). Through this prism, AIESEC stopped being mainly concerned about the social aspects which characterise a society, but also started to care and develop a sense of concern and apprehension about the needs and everything related with the environment and the climate (AIESEC International, 2008; AIESEC International, 2019). Indeed, what AIESEC wanted in the mid-1990s was to build a better and sustainable future. As a result, the organisation shifted its focus area to themes related with social responsibility, higher education and learning, information and society, cultural understanding as well as entrepreneurship (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, the 1990s were also trouble years for AIESEC when it comes to its exchange programs, as their numbers started to decrease. Thus, as way to integrated exchanges within other activities, AIESEC introduced the Programs and Projects (P&P) in 1994, through which individuals as well as local communities were free to organise events that could cause an impact in their local region and surroundings (AIESEC International, 2008). But in reality, this was never the case, because AIESEC had to deal with a lot of bureaucracies' processes and many of AIESEC members and partners did not see any relevance in these programs (*ibid.*).

As a matter of fact, by the end of the 1990s, AIESEC realised that it needed to change its focus, aim and direction, inasmuch as the fall in the number of exchanges was primarily due to

the loss of organisational and alignment within the organisation scope (AIESEC International, 2008). Up to this time, AIESEC was divided into two groups: members and trainees. Whereas the members would rarely participate in the exchange programs, the trainees (exchange participants) were going to any AIESEC events. Subsequently, AIESEC realised this was an issue that required a lot of attention, and hence a group of members came up with the idea of combining both groups together (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the then Director of Strategy, Szymon Komorowski, along with its team members came up with the of the 'AIESEC Experience' – an idea that it is still being used nowadays. The AIESEC Experience – primarily idealised in 2001, but only formally introduced after four years – supports the advanced development of AIESEC members by bringing in more results as well as impact and support to communities. In this regard, they also have shown to be more self-driven in being participative and active change makers. Additionally, the exchanges were distinguished into four groups. Management Traineeships (MT), Development Traineeships (DT), Education Traineeships (ET), and lastly Technical Traineeships (TT) (AIESEC International, 2008).

In 2004, AIESEC focused on the geographical growth of their network, consequently driving it into five groups: Western Europe and North America; Central and Eastern Europe; Asia Pacific; Iberia-America Growth Network– which included countries in the Latin America, USA, and both Spain as well as Portugal – and lastly Middle East and North Africa (AIESEC International, 2008). Through this prism, these Growth Networks enabled AIESEC countries to establish programs that would better capitalise on opportunities and trends present in the economy and society, thus equally providing exchange as well as leadership opportunities connected to relevant issues and themes present in the globe (*ibid.*). As a result, the organisation established the Issue-Based AIESEC Experiences (IBXPs). According to AIESEC International (2008), IBXPs are "*a way to ensure that young people who have identified a passion of r a particular issue have the change to live an experience that not only enables them to gain general leadership skills but also expertise on a particular issue (...) [moreover] a person that has both the needed competencies to lead positive change and has a strong interest and knowledge in one of the key topics of the world that needs positive leadership*". As part of the IBXPs are the Learning Networks (LN) which includes topics such as HIV/AIDS, finance, education, entrepreneurship and corporate responsibility, as well as it allows each participant to lead teams and go on international internships, whereas the organisations who partnered with AIESEC and that host these exchanges are given the opportunity to host an intern and thus partnered with AIESEC in shared activities (AIESEC International, 2008). Surprisingly, it was carried out more than 1 600 exchanges per year in more than 40 countries. This gave then the hope, confidence and drive to AIESEC that it had been, in fact, building up a network of chance-makers who would come together towards a common goal, while equally participating in a dynamic global learning environment (AIESEC International, 2008; AIESEC International, 2019).

Moreover, with the boom of information technology and rapidly growth in the use of Internet in the mid-2000s, AIESEC saw the need to establish an information and communication network to its members. Having said this, the non-profit organisation developed its first online network platform: AIESEC.net, which had over 2 500 users, thus reflecting a good response to a community-based platform system. Nevertheless, this new platform underwent continues enhancements in order to provide better and a more accessible interface to its users, reducing likewise their time as well as communication effort to complete exchange applications, procedures and other bureaucracies (AIESEC International, 2008). Consequently, it enabled to its users to obtain updated information related to their exchange performance and other exchange opportunities (AIESEC International, 2019). Furthermore, AIESEC kept on improving its Global Information System, equally investing on the provision for the needs of AIESEC as part of a long-term Information System (IS). In fact, this plan introduces the MyAIESEC.net in 2007, and which was an evolution from the previous mentioned network, and it created a more user-centric system specifically designed for the users' requirements as well as wants (*ibid.*). Additionally, this platform created "*a common shared space for its members, partners and alumni to interact and participate in the global AIESEC network as equal contributors to the quality of our experiences*". Likewise, it promoted the sharing and dissemination of information related with statistics as well as reports, delivering better communication and interaction between partners (AIESEC International, 2019). At the end of 2007, AIESEC had successfully put a strong commitment in the practice of its values and purposes by ensuring that its membership base was growing at the right pace and was actively involved in taking leadership opportunities while engaging its participants in a dynamic international environment: "*[AIESEC] the largest network of bright minded young leaders that are able to create reality out of their dreams and impact the world through their contribution of positive leadership*" (AIESEC International, 2008).

In 2015, AIESEC created the 'AIESEC 2020 – *On our way to become a Youth Leadership Movement*', which is characterised by a five-year action plan with the aim of being a milestone towards the achievement of the organisation's vision of 'Peace and Fulfilment of Humankind's Potential'(AIESEC International, 2008). In this regard, this strategy is guided by five features in order to implement this plan. Firstly, the 2020 vision is related with the provision of more detailed information regarding current opportunities, so that to provide better and more rewarding experiences worldwide. Secondly, this vision aims at raising awareness of global issues, so that to act and respond to them in a quick as well as effective way. Thirdly, AIESEC wishes to become faster and more agile in empowering its members to find solutions on an everyday level. Fourthly, AIESEC aspires to be more accessible to everyone everywhere in providing its customer services. Finally, AIESEC wishes likewise to be 100 per cent legal and sustainable in its operations at all levels (AIESEC International, 2008).

Broadly, in the first decades, AIESEC's wished to enable young people from different cultures and backgrounds to connect with other cultures so that to understand each other and prevent future generations from conflicts and wars – a scenario that was very familiar at the time – and in this way promoting and working towards world peace (AIESEC International, 2019). As the time passed, AIESEC started to grow, developed and focused on more and more activities to support not only cultural understanding, but also personal as well as professional development of young people to discover their potential and, eventually, change the world to a better place (*ibid.*).

Currently with more than 40 000 members worldwide, AIESEC is a global organization and the world's largest student-run association with the aim to provide students and young people with the opportunity to become future world leaders. With offices in 126 countries and territories, AIESEC is characterized by being a non-political, independent, non-profit organization, with partnerships in more than 2,400 universities and more than 8,000 organizations to facilitate professional and personal development experiences for students across the globe. AIESEC is known as a global platform for young people to develop their own leadership potential, by connecting them to cross-cultural exchanges through global volunteer and professional internships programmes (AIESEC International, 2019). With an aim to shape its exchange programs around the needs of the world, AIESEC has been, ever since its foundation, causing an impact in communities worldwide by mobilizing youth to challenging environments in order to develop their leadership competencies through learning from practical experiences (*ibid.*).

Therefore, having first given a brief historical outlook of what it is AIESEC and why was it formed, the next two sub-sections of the dissertation will be centred on providing more detailed information regarding the organisation's structure as well as vision of the present time.

3.3. AIESEC's Structure and Vision

As previously observed, AIESEC has, since its foundation, been involved in activating leadership, acting sustainably and providing its members development opportunities compromised of professional and volunteer opportunities in a global environment. Furthermore, Abdelrahman Ayman – AIESEC's Global President from 2017 to 2018 – stands up for peace and justice and believes that young people around the world have a stand for things they deeply believe in (Albast, 2017). Furthermore, AIESEC truly desires to achieve *Peace and Fulfilment of Humankind's Potential* by having confidence in *"youth as the key to unlocking a better future. We [AIESEC] believe that leadership is the fundamental solution and it can be developed by everyone"* (AIESEC International, n.d.). Through the '*Fulfilment of Humankind's Potential*', AIESEC envisions to develop individuals with enough skills, knowledge and determination to develop and improve local communities (AIESEC International, 2008).

As aforementioned, AIESEC is determined to lead youth towards a path of sustainability. In this regard, AIESEC defines leadership through four simple features: (i) self-awareness, i.e. the understanding of one's personal values; (ii) world citizenship, which is related with one's interests in world issues and his/her ability as well as responsibility for improving the world; (iii) solution-orientation, which concerns the resilience and positivity of a person to take risks when needed; and (iv) the ability to empower others, i.e. the ability to communicate effectively in different environments (AIESEC International, n.d.). Based on this, AIESEC enables young people to foster their leadership potentials while learning from practical experiences in challenging environments (*ibid..*), inasmuch as the organisation provides to its members experiences in the form of leadership opportunities as well as international internships, while at the same time providing the opportunity for individuals to engage in a global learning environment (AIESEC International, 2008). In the same line, education for sustainable development, as previously mentioned in Chapter II, has the potential to support transformative learning as well as bring about fundamental change in the world. Nonetheless, in order for any individual to become a sustainable change-maker, he/she needs to first learn about sustainability-related issues, and only then embark on a path towards sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017). As such, AIESEC goes hand-in-hand with ESD, provided that AIESEC educates and inspires individuals with the necessary knowledge, values and skills for the improvement of sustainable development worldwide, while equally facilitating the promotion of policy dialogue and the sharing of experiences that educate individuals about the barriers that hinder sustainable development, and thus empowering them to take more responsible actions that lead to the creation of more just societies. It is not only enough to educate people about Sustainable Development and the SDGs, we must also educate individuals on how important the need of a paradigm shift is, i.e. a profound structural transformation that will overcome the obstacles of sustainable development.

At the present, those practical experiences are mainly called as exchange programs and there are three: Global Volunteer, Global Entrepreneur and Global Talent. Briefly, the Global Volunteer program, as its name implies, offers volunteer experiences to young people who seek to develop and emerge themselves in a quest to make a difference in the world while directly contributing to Sustainable Development and consequently to the SDGs. The Global Entrepreneur program is an opportunity for young people, who want to develop themselves as well as their careers, to work in a project at a start-up company for a short-term period while working in a foreigner country and with entrepreneurs. The Global Talent program is the opportunity of, once more, being immersed in a new and different culture while doing a professional internship program that has rewarding benefits for a person's individual growth (AIESEC International, n.d.).

Overall, AIESEC's goal is to engage as well as develop every young person in the world to take action together for common goals as well as prosperity for all. As a matter of fact, a

milestone towards achieving its vision is the statement that AIESEC "*wishes to see the world as a community where its people respect, enjoy and understand each other*" (AIESEC International, 2008). Moreover, AIESEC believes that global as well as sustainable leadership may help to resolve many complex challenges of the present world. In this regard, AIESEC in its official website asserts that the world is shaped by the people who live in it, thus the solution is to develop "*responsible and entrepreneur young leaders today, who will choose how the world should be led tomorrow*".

3.4. AIESEC's Global Goal for Commitment

As acknowledged in Chapter I, in September 2015, leaders and stakeholders all over the world gathered together in order to unite their voices and fight for a better planet, by developing and committing to the Agenda 2030 and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. Three months later, AIESEC's young leaders as well as representatives met at the United Nations headquarters, in New York City, to promote and stimulate youth participation in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 while creating awareness, foster engagement and take action to implement the seventeen global goals (AIESEC International, 2017). As a matter of fact, this gathering was known as *Youth Action Summit*, and put together in a room at the UN headquarters, over hundreds of countries and government representatives, UN officials and the media (*ibid.*). Moreover, AIESEC was the first student run non-governmental organisation to commit as well as align its purpose and operations with the Agenda 2030, and thus it created the *Youth for Global Goals* (Youth4GG) (AIESEC International, 2019). Accordingly, the Youth4GG aims at the development of leadership skills and the potential of youth by engaging them in purposeful as well as cross-cultural projects which are designed to foster the impact of young people on Sustainable Development, by educating more and more individuals about the Agenda 2030 and its corresponding seventeen SDGs, while equally unleashing their potential as well as developing their leadership skills through acting towards world problems they are fond of and concerned about (AIESEC & UN Volunteers, n.d.; AIESEC International, 2019).

Having said this, and as the first step towards the achievement of the SDGs, AIESEC desires to (i) create awareness for Sustainable Development among its members, partners, collaborators and young people; (ii) promote and support youth opinion on issues that matter to them, and consequently promote global and local discussions that can further lead to actionable ideas of support to the achievement of the SDGs by 2030; and (iii) align its global internships and volunteer programmes with the seventeen SDGs, and likewise its achievement (UN, n.d.).

Furthermore, AIESEC, in partnership with the United Nations Volunteers Programme, published the *Young Person's Guide: Changing the World*, in February 2017. This guide falls under the achievement of three (not so) simple things: end extreme poverty, fight inequality and

injustice, and tackle climate change (AIESEC International & UN Volunteers, n.d.). It was created based on the ideas of 500 young leaders from 126 countries, and it is accessible to a lot of people, insofar as it is translated into various languages in order to raise awareness about the SDGs in more than one continent (*ibid.*). Moreover, it consists on a set of simple actions and projects young people can partake so that to contribute to the SDGs, save the world and take one step and action at a time (AIESEC International & UN Volunteers, n.d.). According to Abdelrahman Ayman: "*the Young Person's Guide to Changing the World is a simple call to action urging each of us not only to stand for something but do something about it*" (Albast, 2017).

Too often the world teaches young people and children that they do not possess the skills or knowledge to make a significant change in the world, putting the youngest generations of today far from the centre of development initiatives (Varga, 2017). As a result, in July 2018, AIESEC organized its fifth Global Youth Speak Forum event in Hurghada, Egypt, which had 650 delegates from more than 120 countries, and was represented under the theme "Living the Goals". Correspondingly, the Youth Speak Forum is an event that gathers not only young leaders, but also senior leaders in order to create a varied cross-sector and multi-generational space, so that to inspire friendly discussions on persistent global issues (Varga, 2018). Framed on the framework: Inspire, Engage and Act, the last year's theme was on the empowerment of youth to take action on the SDGs, and likewise learn from organizations that are currently taking steps towards the achievement of the Agenda 2030 (*ibid.*). In this regard, AIESEC facilitates the establishment of inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms that involve different governments, policy-makers, civil society organisations and communities in the developing of workable policies and strategies that promote policy dialogue and sharing of experiences which enable as well as encourage all stakeholders to take action in developing both policies and strategies that foster the implementation of sustainable development.

As a matter of fact, AIESEC wants to take a step forward and find answers that could solve the existing world issues for the long run. Even though education is the key to improve the world – as once Nelson Mandela said: "*Education is the most powerful weapon for changing the world*" – education is also a luxury many cannot afford to possess, especially in countries where conflicts and natural disasters are persistent and have led about 75 million children aged 3-18 to drop out of school (Global Partnership for Education, n.d.). That is why AIESEC is educating young people about cross-cultural understanding, acceptance of others, as well as sustainable development and the SDGs, while empowering youth to reflect on their actions by taking into account their future social and environmental impacts within societies. It is not only important to become sustainable change-makers leaders who embark on a path towards a more sustainable future, we must also learn how to think, and take well informed-sustainable decisions as well as responsible actions, from a local and global perspective, that will lead to a more sustainable and prosperous world, today and tomorrow.

CHAPTER IV – CASE STUDY

4.1. Introduction

Based on the abovementioned AIESEC's main goal of giving empowerment and opportunities to young people to go abroad and volunteer in the name of the achievement of sustainable development, the following chapter of this dissertation will be based on my own experience as a former exchange participant with AIESEC. As detailed in the following pages, during my two months volunteer experience with AIESEC, I collaborated with a non-profit organisation called Harvesting Future Leaders to develop innovative educational teaching lessons for rural children in Jakarta, Indonesia, aimed at empowering them through creative and hands-on learning activities. This description of my intervention would not only serve the purpose of giving reliable, first-hand and real insights of what AIESEC really does on the field but would also help to give a clear picture on how the organisation turns its purposes and objectives into reality.

4.2. A Brief Introduction to Indonesia

4.2.1. Current Political, Economic and Social Situation

Indonesia is now home to more than 260 million inhabitants who live across the countries 17 508 islands – whereas only about 6 thousand islands are inhabited. The country is the largest archipelago in the world and has more than hundreds of ethnic groups as well as over 300 local dialects (UNDP, n.d.) making Indonesia the fourth most populous nation in the whole wide world, and often cited as a model of success in transitioning to a democracy. Likewise, it is the country that has the highest Muslim population in the world. The countries official language is Indonesia Bahasa – commonly known as Indonesian (UNDP Indonesia, 2012).

Indonesia has been an independent nation since the 17 August 1945, when the country first proclaimed independence from the Japanese colonial rule (Fahrudin, 2016). Following the independence, Indonesia was primarily governed by Soekarno who is seen among the population as the main actor of the nationalist fight against the colonizers (Indonesia-Investments, n.d.). During his rule of law, Indonesia suffered from political instability to Islam movements and military coups, which resulted in trouble times for Indonesia between the middle 1940s and 1960s (Indonesia-Investments, n.d.). Following Soekarno presidency, it was Soeharto who succeeded him as president in 1966; and who introduced a new order government that was directed to improving overall development in the country (Fahrudin, 2016).

Notwithstanding a trouble path towards political stability, Indonesia has made impressive progress for the past years. The country's Human Development Index (HDI) is currently at the value of 0.694 – whereas in 1990 was only 0.528 – placing Indonesia in the 116 position out of 189 countries and territories, and in the category of 'middle human development' (UNDP, 2018). Moreover, Indonesia did achieve most of the development goals set in the MDGs Development Agenda and has committed to the incorporation of the SDGs into their national policies planning (UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub, n.d.). Accordingly, Indonesia has been made some significant progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development. Nevertheless, there are still several challenges related to poverty, inequalities, economy and environment that are preponderant in the country and should be taken into account (UNDP, n.d.).

Indonesia still has over 29 million people who live below the poverty line (UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub, n.d.). According to recent World Bank data, about 20% of the Indonesians still remain vulnerable to fall into poverty, inasmuch as their income is slightly above the national poverty line (World Bank, 2019). Furthermore, between the year 2002 and 2013, income inequality within the country increased by twenty-four percent; and the women are the most affected thereto, inasmuch as they have low access opportunities to public services, such as employment and education (UNDP, n.d.). Additionally, only 68% of people who live in urban centres have access to safe drinking water and sanitation (World Bank, 2019). As a consequence, the lack of basic services, such as clean and safe water, significantly and harmfully contributes to the rise of health problems. Indeed, when it comes to health problems, the country has high rates of drug abuse, tobacco use, HIV, and likewise disability as well as a booming of elderly people (Fahrudin, 2016). When it comes to the environment, UNDP claims that most of the development in Indonesia is jeopardised due to environmental degradation as well as climate change; whereas a high portion of its economic growth is mainly driven from the extraction of natural resources at the cost of environmental protection. Moreover, Indonesia is at the world's top list when it comes not only to greenhouse gases emissions, but also deforestation rates (UNDP, n.d.).

4.2.2. Current Education System

When it comes to education, Indonesia is lacking in multiple areas, and the quality of education varies from one area to the other. In December 2014, the then Minister of Education and Culture, Aries Baswedan, publicly declared that the country's educational performance was so poor and violence within the school system so widespread that the country faced an education emergency (Rosser, 2018). To illustrate the seriousness of the issue, the Ministry of Education and Culture strategic plans have stated that the country needs to produce smart and competitive young individuals who can successfully compete for jobs as well as other opportunities in an increasingly globalised economy, if the country wants to become economically competitive (*ibid.*).

The World Bank (2014) reported that Indonesian school system is "*immense and diverse, with over 50 million students and 2.6 million teachers in more than 250 000 schools, the Indonesian education system is the third largest in Asia and the fourth largest in the world*". Moreover, Indonesia devotes 20% of government's national budget on education, decentralizing some functions of the education system to the district as well as school level. In April 2018, the World Bank stated that the "*spending on education was greater than any other sector, approximately meeting the 20 per cent target of total government expenditure. However, since the national budged is 15 per cent of GDP, this education expenditure is 3 per cent of GDP, one of the lowest in the region*" (The World Bank, 2018)**.**

Concerning primary school, the net enrolment rates is below 60% when compared to more well-off nearby areas that have almost universal enrolment (The World Bank, 2014). Net enrolment for secondary education has experienced a steady increase, whereas currently there is 66% net enrolment in Junior Secondary and 45% in Senior Secondary (*ibid.*). Yet, these numbers are still low when compared to other countries in Asia. Likewise, Indonesia is behind to its neighbours' countries in Higher Education with only 11.5% net enrolment (*ibidi.*).

Notwithstanding the fact that over the past few decades, Indonesian children are starting school earlier and staying in school longer than they ever have before, the country has made relatively little progress in improving educational quality as well as learning outcomes (Rosser, 2018). The country's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that Indonesian students are performing some three years behind the OECD average, whereas over fifty percent of Indonesian 15-year-old students do not master basic reading nor mathematics skills (The World Bank, 2014). Furthermore, assessments of the country's education system indicate that it is affected by poor quality education teaching, poor learning outcomes, inadequate facilities and disciplinary problems. According to the OECD, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the poor quality of Indonesia's education system is due to the country's difficulties in improving learning outcomes, inadequate funding, human resources deficits, perverse incentive structures as well as poor management.

When it comes to the rural areas, most schools are run by the government, which provides affordable yet poor quality education. This argumentation is further supported by the status quo of educational system to play a significant role for economic growth, poverty reduction as well as human development of local communities. Even though enrolments rates for poor households has slightly improved over the years, there is some work that still needs to be done in order to close some gaps (Fasih, Afkar & Tomlinson, 2017). For instance, poorer students are less likely to fully complete the school years when compared to the richest households in the country – 61% of the richest households complete the education system, whereas only 23% of the poorest households manage to reach the end of their education (*ibid.*).

Important likewise to note is the demand for better and improved skills and competencies which is increasing rapidly, and it will continue to grow at the same pace as Indonesia's economic transformation. As mentioned by the World Bank, 61% of jobs could be filled by a worker with only having completed primary school, whereas in 2013, merely 47% of the jobs would allow that level of education, inasmuch as one-third of employers prefer workers with a higher school diploma (*ibid.*). Accordingly, the nation's economic growth will require the integration of soft skills to curriculums in schools, so that to boost innovation as well as productivity, and competencies of Indonesian youth population. In the same line of thought, it has been stressed by the Ministry of Education and Culture that reforms to Indonesia's education system, such as adding soft skills to curriculums in schools and training will significantly improve the current situation of the youth (Fasih, *et al.*, 2017).

Indeed, access to education is necessary but it is not sufficient, except the quality of education is equally high (The World Bank, 2017; Fasih, *et al.*, 2017). In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Culture (cited in Fasih, Fasih, *et al.*, 2017) shifted its focus to the Bantuan Operasional Sekolah (BOS) – meaning School Operational Grant Programme – towards education quality in order to support the completion of the 9-year compulsory education national program by national students. As a matter of fact, from 2009 onwards the government has changed the BOS' objectives, approach and orientation from outreach to quality improvement and has ever since used the BOS program to provide to its students' financial support for school relative expenditures, as well as strengthen school-based management (Fasih, *et al.*, 2017).

Overall, education and skills are central to Indonesia's growth prospects. In a hopeful thought, Rosser (2018) underlines that the challenge Indonesia now faces is to know how to to develop and establish an education system that will better support the needs of an emerging economy, as well as the requirement of a fundamental shift that prioritises quality, efficiency and the improvement of learning outcomes, enabling students to form core skills and understanding.

4.3. Harvesting Future Leaders

4.3.1. The Project

To the extent that English is not a compulsory subject in Indonesian schools, there are, in the country, a lot of projects that highlight a breakthrough that Indonesian kids should have an equal opportunity to learn English as a foreign language from primary age, and that shall help them to unlock a better future. Consequently, another central actor for this dissertation is Harvesting Future Leaders (HFL). HFL is a non-profit community with the aim of creating Indonesia and world's future leaders by "harvesting" not only English skills and literacy in the language, but likewise good values, understanding, empathy and a global perspective (Harvesting Future

Leaders, n.d.). The community's activities are focused in a little house with no tables nor chairs and to which the people and children involved addressed it as 'teaching place', which is located in the metropolitan area of Jakarta, more specifically in Cankung.

In 2006, HFL was founded by a Chinese couple who dedicated their life to the Indonesian children and their future. After a few years when they moved back to China, the project was passed over to an Indonesian family friend (Harvesting Future Leaders, n.d.). As of today, the family has been managing the project as it is meant to be: developing culture understanding between the children and the volunteers, increasing their knowledge about anything in life, empowering them to become the new leaders of tomorrow and equally achieve all of their dreams (Harvesting Future Leaders, n.d.). Indeed, the children who join the HFL classes between 4pm to 6pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and likewise on Saturdays, go to school on a daily basis, but they likewise come to their houses in the slums of Rawa Bandung, where most the households are poor and with no possibilities to offer to the children the opportunity to get a quality education (Harvesting Future Leaders, n.d.). In this context, these children come to the teaching place after their school finishes in order to have some fun while learning at the same time.

The family who nowadays is responsible for the continuity of the project – and who I had the privilege to meet – feels that when investing in spreading knowledge, they are likewise investing in the children's future. Their project idea is to provide potentially long-term educational interventions in rural areas in Jakarta, using creative methods that take into account diverse situations and backgrounds of each child. In a hopeful thought, the family expects to improve the quality of education and in specific to match the current needs of the children in the long-term as well as in an as-need basis way through the use of different pedagogical methods that can address different time availability and schedules of children, so that to give them the hope as well as drive to conquer all of their dreams, equally growing up into whoever they desire to be. As one member of the family once said: "*we are trying to work on improving education and literacy in Indonesia and helping disadvantaged children through English based education and other innovation-based methods. Through the participation of volunteers, this is [in fact] an educational intervention which would drastically impact the quality of education of these children. And this is very important because the children will be the future leaders of tomorrow. The overall aim of these teaching classes is to ensure these children have fun above all while learning English, a new culture understanding and empathy, as well as playing didactic and pragmatic games that foster their creative thinking and team spirit.*"

4.3.2. Relevance of the Project and Its Continuous Work

HFL bases its teaching classes in innovative teaching methods such as games, singing, and most important, cultural understanding in the form of community dialogue, with the collaboration and

help of volunteers who come from all over the world, while participating in the Volunteer Exchange programs provided by AIESEC.

Current education programs and teaching methods in Indonesia might not produce what is pragmatic or necessary in the everyday lives of the Indonesian population. Equally, the students are not obtaining the expected learning outcomes, and that is why the work of HFL is important. The HFL community has been implementing an innovative educational and teaching method that provides quality education that develops a wholesome person, and which is suitable for children aged 6-14 living in rural areas of Jakarta. HFL incorporates its teaching lessons on hands-on learning activities that provide the children with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to face problems they may encounter on day-to-day basis, consequently facilitating their motivation and self-empowerment to think both critically and creatively.

Based on the aforementioned, HFL proposes a teaching method that is based on a bottom-up approach which has as an objective the increasing of children's knowledge as well as awareness on global issues, while equally involving them into the learning process in a fun and more pragmatic, as well as didactic way. HFL believes that to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the project, they must support a teaching environment free of any race discrimination and violence, following a concept towards development and global education, which acknowledges that education is a method towards the achievement of sustainable development and which is able to be sustained and 'harvested' by the children, who will, in the near future, be the new leaders of tomorrow.

Nonetheless, one should bear in mind that the continuity of this project would have never been possible if it was not for AIESEC. HFL is a very small community and not very well-known worldwide, consequently the information about the work of this organisation is mainly spread through mouth-to-mouth communication, as well as between the cooperation with AIESEC. That is why the work and help from the volunteers is crucial to conduct the project with commitment as well as dedication, and in a fruitful and friendly environment. Furthermore, to date, HFL has welcomed more than thirty-five volunteers from Europe, North America and Asia.

Moreover, when critically approaching this project, one should ponder that HFL is merely a little community that offers to rural children a teaching method based on cooperation, cultural understanding and empathy, within a holistic as well as humanistic education approach that benefits all of the HFL children on an equal basis. Most importantly, it is a promise of a set of opportunities for the children to have a better future and live a life in dignity. It is a permanent and incessant effort towards the promise of the most important human right: the right to education – regardless of age, sex, religion, political or social status. As the implementation of this new educational teaching method stems from man-made changes in education systems, it is important to recognise how the real and concrete effects of the innovative teaching methods will require some time until they can be effectively measured and taken into account. Firstly, because one

needs to thoroughly assess what could be the net benefits, if this model is, in fact, implemented. Secondly, this new education approach is thought off as changing many years of social and ideological stratifications within an educational system and model that benefits more the teacher than the student, insofar as the main actor in a classroom is the teacher, whereas the student's role is merely to receive information and take notes. Considering these facts, this model should be carefully measured in order not to allude any premature assumptions and conclusions.

4.4. Assessment, Remarks and Evaluation of the Project

4.4.1. Assessment and Personal Considerations

Throughout my two months volunteering experience in this project, I learned that this small community try to reach and provide, in a very small teaching place, fun and hands-on English classes to more than twenty-five children aged 6-14, in a rural area in the city of Jakarta, so that they are not left behind and have the same education opportunities as other children in the country. I learned that the objectives of the HFL project have been designed to potentially affect the life and prospects of the community on a broader scale, consequently not being confined to the recurring social inequalities of the country's current educational system, while underlining the relevance of lifelong learning.

During my fieldwork, I was firstly impacted by the state of poverty of the area and the people. It made me realise that the rurality as well as the poverty of the place had a serious impact not only on the development of the community, especially in terms of living conditions, but also in the education level, teaching methods and learning outcomes. Moreover, during the teaching classes, the children seemed shy and sometimes reluctant to explore the freedom of creativity in the educational context. As a matter of fact, the teaching approach conducted by me was meant to leave the children free of being creative, but they felt lost at first, without the rules they are used to follow in a more traditional and often "serious" education environment. Secondly, albeit the linguist barrier was taken into consideration before my fieldwork, it sometimes constituted an obstacle to a smooth flow of events. Actually, following some feedback I got from the HFL community, it was hard for the children to understand me, as I would speak English rather fast for them sometimes. Thirdly, another important factor to point out is that the children always appeared very respectful and disciplined. Every lesson would start with a collective Catholic prayer, followed by a Muslim prayer, and then a traditional singing, which demonstrated the influence of cultural aspects and diverse ethnicities in the country and correspondingly to the children everyday lives.

Teaching was based in dynamic moments of games, such as ice-breaking type of games, singing and "guess what/who" games, in where moments of listening the doubts faced by the

children were intertwined with the activities (Annex 3). This balance genuinely contributed to keep the attention and the participation of the children high and constant. The playful nature of the activities conducted gave the children the change of absorbing important notions and values such as solidarity, culture understanding and cooperation, while having fun within an environment that is nothing like the environment of a school to which they commonly associate with rigor and seriousness. Moreover, I focused my teaching lessons not only on English grammar and vocabulary, but also on global issues, by providing concrete skills and innovative insights on how to tackle them. In this regard, I would help the children understand how complex the challenges faced by the world are, by conducting community dialogues.

In order to facilitate my activities with the children and thus gaining important insights on the way of life on-site, I started my first days of teaching with a community dialogue, introducing myself and stating why I was there for the next couple of months. The dialogue helped me to get to know the HFL children on an individual level, as well as it gave me the opportunity to listen to the children's passions, dreams, concerns and hopes for a better future and planet. As such, Yosie brainstormed some of the most pressing challenges that the children face on a daily basis, to which all of the children agreed to. For example, most of them have to take long commutes from home to school, as well as there is a lack of study material (for example, coursebooks), and most of the schools have fair or poor infrastructures, and sometimes when it rains, children do not attend school nor the teaching place because (i) the road, they have to take is closed due to floods; (i) it rains inside the classrooms; and (iii) even some of the schools attended by the children have only a partially roof where some desks are partly under the open air. The presentation of each concern represented a moment of listening and sharing that fostered dialogue and understanding among the HFL children. The promotion of a dynamic and interactive dialogue had a significant importance in understanding the surrounding environment as well as the feeling of people living in it, and thus obtain a clearer, honest and more reliable perception of the HFL children daily life. As a result, this activity contributed to the development of a community dialogue that listed local challenges faced by the children through empathy, as well as a sensation of being heard, which gives them enough confidence to expose, on another similar contexts, not only their concerns, but also key idea solutions to the challenges they face on a daily basis.

Moreover, it should be taken into account that when I went to Indonesia to work with the HFL community, the project was not as developed as it is nowadays. As a matter of fact, in 2016, the project was mainly focused on English literacy, and providing to the children fun English classes – due to the aforementioned fact that English is not a compulsory subject in schools. However, with the increase debate on sustainable development for the past years, and the involvement of AIESEC in working towards the achievement of the global goals, HFL has decided to innovate its teaching methods towards a more pragmatic and innovative approach, not

simply focusing on teaching English, but also teaching the children about the SDGs and their importance in achieving sustainable development, as well as challenging activities that promote creative and design thinking (Annex 4).

Yet, it should be stated that the HFL teaching method is not meant to challenge the entire educational system of Indonesia, which is mainly grounded in traditional and basic elements such as literacy and numeracy which, nonetheless, are still crucial for the early cognitive development of a child and should not be forgotten or completely eliminated. Indeed, quality education is a matter of voluntariness, it does not happen by change. Although traditional Indonesian habits may impede rapid changes, the teaching lessons implemented by me during my two months volunteer experience was only meant to ensure that a better educational situation is possible in the long run for the HFL children, while equally showing to the children that there is always more than what they are commonly used to see, experience, hear, feel and learn on their daily lives.

4.4.2. Limitations

Having closely worked in the HFL project made me understand how important the impact of an NGO – no matter how big or small – has on the cognitive development of children, and how significantly its impact is within a community. Usually the implementation of a project represents just the initial step of a long-term plan that could bring a meaningful change in a country. However, for all young children to be educated by 2030, one needs to focus on greatly improving the learning opportunities for disadvantaged children. In reality, achieving this objective is a limitation, insofar as it will require enhanced instructive quality and solution orientated methods for the most disadvantaged children, albeit the Indonesian government focus more on the education of advantaged children, leaving others behind. Therefore, for systems to close education inequalities, they must focus on the needs of more disadvantaged children.

Whereas the education topic of the project itself is so wide and determined by several features that it becomes often difficult to assess with precision the exact drivers of its implications without falling into the trap of omitting various predispositions. Giving a closer look, if on one end poverty and inequality might emerge as one of the biggest motives hindering the impartiality of quality education access, other more subtle elements might implicitly affect it in the same way. Although the Indonesian government has started to make some big improvements in the country's education system, the overall Indonesia's education system is centred within an environment with already set and defined political, economic and social rules as well as traditional habits that may impede rapid changes. For instance, HFL demonstrates how a very small community of no more than six people is able to ensure a high level of positive results in the children while placing them at the centre of their teaching lessons through a teaching approach that benefits everyone.

Furthermore, an important realisation is that high levels of learning outcomes by the HFL children does not necessarily mean I performed or taught in the most adequate way. Before having become a teacher in Indonesia, I was a student myself who had just finished her Degree in Translation and who did not know much of what constitutes to be a teacher. However, this constraint was partially disentangled by the fact that I did not perform my teaching lessons alone. As previously underlined, the help of Yosie, who has been teaching the HFL children for the past years, crucially helped me to accordingly plan my teaching lessons by giving me fundamental insights about the target children and what they had already learned, as well as what they could do or not do. As such, Yosie strongly helped me to (i) build an educational environment where the HFL children were placed at the centred of learning; and (ii) establish and foster a learner-friendly environment that was more close to the habits and cultural traditions of the community itself and thus not too closed to our western-biased habits – habits that we often like to impose in another's countries.

4.4.3. Strengths

During the implementation of the project, it could have been observed how the hands-on approach attracted and engaged the children in a very positive as well as active way. Every day, the children always enjoyed doing things together, communicate and learn with one another in a very fruitful and friendly environment. The HFL children always sat still during classes while carefully listening the explanation. Likewise, HFL children have always been eager to learn something new from external volunteers. As I was told by Yosie, at the end of the classes, the children would go home and tell their parents all the activities they had done, as well as all of the new English words and grammar rules they had learned that day during class.

Another important value to this project has been the AIESEC. None of this would have been possible if I had not decided to personally go on a volunteer experience to Indonesia with AIESEC. Therefore, the work of AISEC is consequently important hereto, so that to guarantee quality education in the five continents it operates on. As a result, AIESEC has partnership with UNICEF in an effort to reach over five thousand children and teach them about the importance of sustainable development. This initiative aims to empower youth through peer and bottom-up education and motive them to become part of the movement by participating in the organisation's Exchange Program. Briefly, the end goal is to enable young people to become powerful actors in driving success of the achievement of the seventeen sustainable development goals, as well as inspiring them to contribute to a better world, and hence cause an impact on the community and country the volunteer decides to go to (Varga, 2017). In another words, a little bit what I did during my two months in Indonesia: I promoted education in a rural area in Jakarta, while not only teaching children basic English grammar and new vocabulary, but also teaching them how

to think critically and creatively, while equally enabling them to see in themselves the confidence as well as the drive they need to grow into the future change-makers the world desperately needs.

Conducting this project was particularly helpful to understand the real conditions both the children and community face on a daily basis. The effectiveness of the intervention was assured thanks to a close collaboration with the HFL team, who was able to manage linguistic and cultural aspects with innovative teaching approaches. For instance, the harmony as well as the solidarity during the lesson, massively contributed to the creation of an environment where children felt at ease and free to openly participate in classes, and not feel too shy to share their own ideas and doubts related to a certain topic or issue they might be concerned or passionate about. As such, the transparency and harmonisation of the classes encouraged the children to be honest and non-fearful of expressing their own opinions and concerns. Overall, the volunteer experience evolution is positive and matches the intended outcomes of the involvement of students in activities, not only during the days of the activities conducted, but also for future practical and same environment contexts.

4.4.4. Future Suggestions

Education is the key to many world problems. Likewise, it is the key to a dignified life, to one's well-being and health, and certainly to the achievement of the Agenda 2030. A quality education system gives the opportunity to children and young people to engage in politics, defend their human rights and have the opportunity to get a good job, and consequently increase one's household income. Promoting quality education in a country helps to promote social, economic and political development within a society. In order to achieve the targets established in the SDG number four, it is essential to support disadvantaged children and give them equal access to quality education and opportunities.

To the extent that to realise the SDGs will require an emphasis on critical thinking in formal education, as well as continuous learning in day-to-day activities, and as I previously mentioned, the sort of learning that will be necessary if we want to achieve Sustainable Development, is not just what goes on in schools, but likewise what goes on day in, day out in communities, in households, in government and in NGOs. Based on this assumption, what I suggest is that the HFL community keeps on providing to the children an education view that prioritises informal, bottom-up approach and hands-on learning over the typical institutional teaching method, because students never learn what the teachers teach, but they learn by doing and when they get involve in challenges that are new to them, and thus have to come up with innovative solutions in order to solve the problem – and sometimes even in unfamiliar contexts and environments.

It is therefore necessary to help students build their critical thinking, creativity as well as new abilities and skills, so that to make sound and reasonable choices in the face of inherent problems, complexity and uncertainty. For instance, I acknowledged that classes – such as arts – which develop students' creative thinking are not part of the school curricula of many of the schools attended by the HFL children. As such, it is important that HFL keeps on providing teaching lessons that encourage and nurture the children's creative thinking for the future.

CHAPTER V – ACHIEVING THE SDGS

5.1. SDGs Analysis

When evaluating the possible implications that both the work of AIESEC and the work of HFL's project might have on sustainable development, it is possible to identify the impact on several Sustainable Development Goals. In fact, the project aims to tackle SDG number four, whose primary goal is to "*ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*" (UN, 2015). In this regard, the target 4.7 plays a great role in enabling HFL and AIESEC becoming a centre of excellence that provides equal and quality education to many people in the world: "*by 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development*" (UN, 2015).

Whereas the main purpose of the project is improving the school curricula of Indonesian schools, HFL also wishes to protect the rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable children, while equally inspiring them to further their studies as well as acquire practical skills that may be of great use when applying for a job position in the future. Based on this assumption, the target 4.4 takes on particular importance thereto: "*by 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship*" (UN, 2015). In a same line of thought, there is a certain belief that this target goes hand-in-hand with the purpose of SDG number eight: "*promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*" (*ibid.*). As a result, both of the aforementioned goal and target will likely enable and encourage individuals to consider and pursue different employment opportunities and working scenarios.

As a matter of fact, the work promoted by AIESEC and HFL in wishing to close the inequality gap by bringing together people from mixed cultures, casts, religion, age and gender to promote equality in all its forms and shapes, and understanding as well as respect among all people, is thought off as having a directly impact in the SDG number ten: "*reduce inequality within and among countries*"; as well as its correspondent target 10.2: "*by 2030, empower and promote social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or other status*" (UN, 2015).

Moreover, the work promoted by HFL in ensuring that equitable and quality of education is pursued within the academic institutions of Indonesia is fundamental in supporting the

achievement of SDG number sixteen which seeks to establish more resilient, peaceful and just institutions: "*promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*" (UN, 2015).

Lastly, as the work conducted by HFL is mainly internationally recognised from the cooperation with AIESEC, and it owes her the great majority of its achievements, this initiative promotes the value of global partnership for the achievement of sustainable development as per SDG number seventeen: "*strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development*", "*(...) by bringing together national governments, the international community, civil society, the private sector and other actors*" (UN, 2015).

5.2. Applying the SDGs

From the aforementioned, one could observe that the impact of the work of AIESEC as well as the project implemented by HFL in a rural area in Indonesia extends far beyond any education system itself. Their impact efficiently reached remarkable achievements, and as described in this dissertation, poor quality education is an extremely difficult issue to tackle and involves several SDGs. Framing quality education within the work of both AIESEC and HFL in terms of the SDGs allows a micro focused perspective on how this issue is a confluence of economic, social and environmental factors that provide a set of indicators to gauge the progress of intended policy options. Consequently, measuring the effects of policies is necessary to assess their efficiency, accountability and make changes where they are needed. The different SDGs' targets and indicators are precisely meant to offer reliable methods of policy analysis, inasmuch as localising both the targets and indicators provides accountability through measurements of policy dealing with, in this case, education (McCollum, Echeverri, Riahi & Parkinson, 2017).

Based on the aforementioned, a cross-impact matrix created by the author is presented herein. Additionally, the subsequent matrix is based on the interaction of seven major targets identified based on literature and common sense, serving the purpose to get a clearer and more precise picture on which SDGs should be prioritised if HFL wishes to provide even more equitable and quality education to rural Indonesian children. The previously mentioned targets are the following (UN, 2015):

1. Under SDG 1: "End poverty in all its forms":
   - Target 1.2: "By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions";

- Target 1.5: "By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters".

2. Under SDG 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all":

- Target 4.1: "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes";

- Target 4.4.: "By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship";

- Target 4.7: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

3. Under SDG 8: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all"

- Target 8.3: "By 2030, promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services".

4. Under SDG 10: "Reduce inequality within and among countries"

- Target 10.2: "By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status".

The interdependent nature of the SDGs also creates synergistic or conflicting interactions when policies pursue any single or multiple aims (McCollum et al., 2017; Pradhan, Costa, Rybski, Lucht, Kropp, 2017). My analysis of the interlinkages of goals and its respective targets situated in the impact of HFL educational project finds they are mostly complementary and can produce cross-cutting benefits. As an example, increase knowledge about sustainable development in an educational environment with practical activities can empower and stimulate one's creativity – '*think outside the box*' – and openness for the elaboration of innovative solution towards sustainable development.

The following presented cross-matrix impact organises and aggregates knowledge about interactions between the abovementioned SDG targets for the case of HFL case study, and it likewise follows Nilsson et al.'s seven-point typology of the nature of interactions. According to

the authors (cited in Weitz, Carlsen, Nilsson & Skanberg, 2017), the indicators in this typology can vary from "*cancelling (-3), counteracting (-2), and constraining (-1) on the negative side, to consistent (0) when there is no positive nor negative interaction, enabling (+1), to reinforcing (+2) when one target directly creates conditions that lead to the achievement of another target, and indivisible (+3) when one target is inextricably linked to the achievement of another*". The *scale of colours goes from dark red to dark green, symbolizing "-3/cancelling" and "+3/indivisibl*e" respectively. Moreover, the net influence from one target on all other targets is shown by the row-sum, whereas the column-sum shows how much a target is influenced by all other targets in total. As noticeable, the matrix illustrates that overall the interactions are positive, with influences varying between "consistent" (0, meaning "no significant positive or negative interactions"), "enabling interactions" (1: "creates conditions that further another goal"), "reinforcing" (2 meaning it directly creates conditions that lead to the achievement of another goal), "indivisible (3: "when an objective is inextricably linked to the achievement of another goal") (*ibid.*).

			Influenced SDG Targets					
		1.2.	1.5.	4.1.	4.4.	4.7.	8.3.	10.2.	SUM
Influencing SDG Targets	1.2.		0	1	2	2	1	0	6
	1.5.	3		2	2	2	3	2	14
	4.1.	3	2		1	3	0	2	11
	4.4.	2	2	0		1	2	0	7
	4.7.	3	3	2	1		0	0	9
	8.3.	2	2	0	3	0		0	7
	10.2	0	2	2	2	0	2		8
	SUM	13	11	7	11	8	8	4	

The International Council for Science (ICSU) (cited in Weitz et al., 2017) importantly highlighted that "*the analysis is done at the local level of targets, not at a global level, because targets are much more specific, and this is where the substantive interactions are more easily discerned*". Using the question "*if progress is made on targets x (rows), how does this influence progress on*

target y (columns)?" (Weitz et al., 2017), it was underlined and recognised the areas where progress made would enable and reinforce more the other goals (Weitz et al., 2017). The most influential targets appeared to be target 1.5 (sum = 14), target 4.1 (sum = 11) target 4.7 (sum = 9), and target 10.2 (sum = 8). Hence, what is suggested herein is that governments should focus their policies around these targets in which even a marginal increment is found as more efficiently improving conditions of the other targets through trickle-down effects.

As understandable from the previously exposed analysis in previous chapters, education policies must be aligned with national commitments towards the achievement of the Agenda 2030, insofar as quality education is key in supporting transformative and innovative learning, as well as bring about fundamental change towards a better future for all (UNESCO, 2018). As a matter of fact, progress towards most targets creates general benefits across other dimensions. For instance, education is highly related to poverty reduction: "*better educated individuals in wage employment are paid more to reward them for their higher productivity. On average, one year of education is associated with a 10% increase in wage earnings*" (UNESCO, 2014). While education can help reduce poverty, it is likewise vital for a country's economic growth, because it helps generate as well as increase the country per capita GDP growth from 2% to 2.5% in a year (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, when the quality of education and the learning outcomes are low, the relevant skills as well as competencies for decent jobs might not be a sufficient engine of growth of the national economy. As Jim Yong Kim, former President of the World Bank Group, asserted: "*every children should have the opportunity not only to go to school but to acquire the knowledge and skills she needs to lead a healthy, productive life, care for herself and her family, and become an empower citizen. At the national level, countries need workforces with the skills and competencies required to keep farms and factories producing, create jobs, fuel innovation and competitiveness, and drive economic growth that benefits everyone*" (UNESCO, 2014).

Moreover, as per Article 4 of the Agenda 2030: "*recognising that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first*", it pledges, in fact, for universality and that no one must be left behind, albeit this is not what is happening. In many countries, inequality based on income, gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disabilities or religion still persists, consequently threatening long-term economic and social development (UN Sustainable Development, n.d.). When it comes to education, especially in Indonesia, one can note that the country's educational system has not been equal to all people. For example, according to the World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE), in Indonesia, gender disparities are relatively pronounced in the secondary completion rate, inasmuch as in 2012 only 47% of the poorest female population living in rural areas completed secondary education, in contrast to the 51% of the poorest male population. Furthermore, Glennie (2018) promptly asserted that "*it is very easy to predict who will be the poorest people in any given*

country. Just look at someone's ethnicity, gender, disability and where they live, and you will be able to make a depressingly accurate guess about their economic and social reality". In fact, tackling inequality within countries is not an easy task, and national policymaking should be focused on universality as well as paying attention to the needs of the most disadvantaged people. As such, concerted efforts which imply that no one is left out of progress and growth are extremely necessary (UN Sustainable Development, n.d.). Additionally, it is not only important that national governments empower and promote inclusive social and economic growth, but also develop strategies that are guided by the principle of leaving no one behind, ensuring access to quality basic services and human rights for all, hence building more equal societies.

Based on these assumptions, HFL through its teaching lessons is acting to ensure that rural children in Jakarta are guaranteed a dignified and fair life, by closing the gap of the impact of inequality, which has a really significant role to play in poverty reduction, alongside other factors such as economic growth, as well as equitable and quality education – which are in line with SDG number eight and also SDG number four, respectively.

While SDG number four certainly begins to respond to some of the constraints that slow down the achievement of sustainable development and given the complexity in the concrete effects of the institutionalisation of any policies pursued by governments, it will take a long time until they will be fully implemented. In this regard, this analysis presents areas that give most 'bang for the buck' and, for this reason, it is merely a representation of a comprehensively thorough starting point for any further research on this matter

CONCLUSION

In order to give a better framework on the subject, the dissertation offered an initial description of what the terms sustainable development and education mean. Consequently, the dissertation proceeded by elucidating on the relationship between these two factors. Whereas sustainable development means a "*set of global aspirations for economic progress, better standard of living and a healthy planet for all*" (Steiner, 2018), and education means human rights as well as a mean to promote lifelong learning and to fight against many of today's world most erroneous problems that the Agenda 2030 acknowledges, the two concepts go hand in hand because education can indeed be a great mean to achieve peace, social justice and liberty. Thus, the future will only be sustainable if we guarantee quality, inclusive and a global perspective on the right to education to all of us.

Subsequently, the work concentrated on the true actors linking education to sustainable development, among which non-profit organisations represent one of the most important ones. Among the different NGOs working on the education sector, this dissertation highlighted the work of AIESEC. An organisation born from the wreckages of a world war, AIESEC has been chosen as the subject of this dissertation as it is a non-profit, international organisation that offers culture-understanding through empowerment opportunities to young people to go abroad, cause an impact within a community, and become active leaders towards the achievement of sustainable development by 2030. Furthermore, an overview on my personal experience with the organisation has been offered in the following section, serving the purpose of realising if innovative teaching approaches, such as the Harvesting Future Leaders one, can really help into reducing the educational and social problems identified through the literature review – which in fact can, if one looks deeper into it. Finally, after a thorough evaluation on my experience, the dissertation concluded with a section dedicated to the analysis of the SDGs. In this last section, it can be concluded that the 17 goals and 169 targets that underpin the SDGs tackle many complex and challenging issues that face the world. Today, they provide a holistic framework for policymaking for achieving sustainable development through the balanced progress of economic, environmental and social development. Indeed, matching children living in rural areas needs with the right kind of education is a challenge. As such, one of the many solutions presented herein is the idea to provide tailored education on a framework that is more suitable to children, bearing in mind their social and cultural contexts.

We are all linked by a common sense of humanity that allows us to understand one another while overcoming linguistic and culture barriers through empathy, understanding and respect. Yet, we live in a world in which unequal wealth distribution still persists, in which armed conflicts and inequality are present in so many ways and forms. Thus, it is up to each one of us to secure equal access to quality education services for everyone, as I firmly believe education is

the key for peace and justice. With my volunteer experience, I realised how it is not enough to set global targets for all - we need also to adapt to each individual context. The world has seen too many well-intended development programs fail because they did not take into account cultural settings. In this regard, a culture-informed approach is, likewise, an essential enabler of sustainable development, and it must be seen as an overarching principle for all development efforts. People are asking how the world can turn global, ambitious goals and targets into meaningful improvements – and we must be clear that cultural-understanding and education are crucial parts of the answer, because cultural-understanding, quality education and innovative teaching approaches, such as the AIESEC and Harvesting Future Leaders ones, can really help into combating many of the different challenges that hinder as well as threaten the social, economic, political and human development of so many societies in today's world, such as inequality, exclusion, poverty, unemployment and lack of information.

To conclude, I am a firm believer that the real element towards sustainable development is education, inasmuch as the richness of my experience made me realise how significant is the work of HFL in guaranteeing equitable, quality and innovative education to the HFL children. Throughout my volunteer experience, I deeply understood that education is about human rights, lifelong learning and solidarity. It is both patience and the understanding of one's country culture. It is fighting against poverty, empowering people and moving societies. It is a societal thing, a constant transformation and an evolution process to meet the needs of turbulent times and many diverse societies. It is a constant change of perspectives and skills that can be adapted in today's ever-changing world. It is reskilling, reskilling and reskilling people. And, above all, it is the foundation for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Education Milestones

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2" style="writing-mode:vertical">Key Education Milestones</td>
<td>Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
10th December 1948, Paris, France</td>
<td>ARTICLE 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

(As per Article 26, Universal Declaration of Human Rights. UN, 1948)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal Declaration on Education for All,
5-9 March 1990, Jomtien, Thailand</td>
<td>THE PURPOSE AND AIMS:

(i) Recalling that education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout the world;

(ii) Understanding that education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic and cultural progress, tolerance, and international cooperation;

(iii) Knowing that education is an indispensable key to, though not a sufficient condition for, personal and social improvement;

(iv) Recognising that traditional knowledge and indigenous cultural heritage have a value and validity in their own right and a capacity to both define and promote development;

(v) Recognising that sound basic education is fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education and of</td>
</tr>
</table>

		scientific and technological literacy and thus self-resilient development; and
		(vi) Recognising the necessity to give to present and coming generations and expanded vison of, and a renewed commitment to, basic education to address the scale and complexity of the challenge
		(According to the Universal Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. UNESCO, 1990)
	World Education Forum 26-28 April 2000, Dakar, Senegal	**COMMITMENTS:** (i) Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children; (ii) Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality; (iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes; (iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; (v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality; (vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. (According to the World Education Forum, Final Report. UNESCO, 2000)
	UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)	**THE PURPOSE AND AIMS:** The GAP on SDGs seeks to generate and scale-up SDG and to accelerate progress towards sustainable development,

| | | while simultaneously aiming at contributing to the Agenda 2030, through:

(i) Reorienting education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to a sustainable future.

(ii) Strengthening education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development

(According to the UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development Website) |
|---|---|---|
| | **Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action**
19-22 May 2015, Incheon, Republic of Korea | **A New Vision for Education Towards 2030:**

"*On this historic occasion, we reaffirm the vision of the worldwide movement for Education for All initiated in Jomtien in 1990 and reiterated in Dakar in 2000 – the most important commitment to education in recent decades and which has helped drive significant progress in education. We also reaffirm the vision and political will reflected in numerous international and regional human rights treaties that stipulate the right to education and its interrelation with other human rights. We acknowledge the efforts made; however, we recognize with great concern that we are far from having reached education for all.*"

(According to the Preamble of the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, World Education Forum, 2015) |

Annex 2 – The Sustainable Development Goals: Goal number 4

GOAL 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	
TARGETS	**DESCRIPTION**
4.1	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes
4.2	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
4.3	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
4.5	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
4.6	By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
4.7	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
4.A	Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
4.B	By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small islands developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
4.C	By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small islands developing states

Annex 3 - Teaching Activity I

Example of day-to-day activities I conducted during my volunteer experience period in Jakarta, Indonesia. Each activity is described in detail with explanations of its purpose, description, intended outcomes and actual outcomes.

'SPEED-DATING' & TELEPHONE WHISPER GAME

Description: 'Speed-dating' is an ice-breaking game in which the participants – in this case the children – sit down in two rows and in pairs of two. Every round of one-on-one talk in the pair lasts for about two minutes. The purpose is for the pair to talk with one another about either their dislikes or likes, hobbies, what they want to be when they grow up, favourite colour, food, artist, sport, and so on and forth. During this game, the volunteer with the help of the teacher, Yosie, also took part in the game in order to break the ice with the children. Three rounds of discussions concerning one's participant interests as well as passions were performed.
The following game was the telephone whisper. All the children were divided into four groups of five children each. Every team was given an English word and the task was for the first student in line to whisper the given word to the next person until it reaches the last child in the team. Then, he/she has to go to the white board and write the word understood. The team who would guess more right words would win the game.

Purpose and Intended Outcomes of the Games: The overall purpose was to break the ice between children and the volunteer. The specific objective of the 'speed-dating' game was to familiarize the children with one another on an individual level. The telephone whisper game had as an objective fostering teamwork between each other, as well as a sense of collaborative achievement.

Actual Outcomes of the Games: The results were the same as what I intended in the beginning. The children thoroughly enjoyed and also received the message given through these activities: to have fun along the way.

Annex 4 – Teaching Activity II

Spaghetti-Marshmallow Challenge Game

Description: Another good example of an ice-breaking game is the Spaghetti-Marshmallow Challenge: a good and funny activity to promote team-building spirit as well. As a matter of fact, ice-breaking activities are meant to encourage students to think creatively and help them to get familiar with tools they might not be so much familiarised with (Yeganehpour, 2016). In particular, they are especially good for including shy students and encouraging them to join discussions as well as group works (*ibid.*). Likewise, this challenge helps establish an inclusive and fun classroom environment based on mutual trust and respect through teamwork. In the Spaghetti-Marshmallow activity, the participants are provided with twenty uncooked spaghetti sticks, tape, strings and one marshmallow that has to be put on the top – at end of the activity. The goal: participants ought to assemble the tallest and strongest freestanding structure in a teamwork spirit by using only the provided tools. The game lasts for around eighteen to twenty minutes.

Purpose and Intended Outcomes I first learned about this game through my professors on an exchange semester at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, and thus decided to ask Yosie to try this activity in one teaching class and give me feedback on how the children reacted to this challenge. As I told Yosie, the purpose of the game was meant to consolidate the relations among the children, stimulate creativity and innovation by trying different solutions to reach the final goal. Actually, the main goal of the marshmallow challenge is to foster teamwork, communication as well as a sense of collaborative achievement. The game evidently shows that the whole team has to work together in order to build the self-supporting structure (Toastmasters International, n.d.).

Actual Outcomes: The children thoroughly enjoyed playing this game, and it worked well in terms of team-building spirit, equally pushing the children out of their comfort zone, inasmuch as they were asked to build a structure without any precise given rules, with materials they were not familiar with and that do not have a particular use in their everyday lives. Overall, it is an activity that promotes creativity thinking 'with what you have', in which it was important for children to understand what they have at their disposal and be innovative in the way they use it.