

Africanizing the SDGs: A key factor for enhancing sustainability consciousness within South African schools

Chinaza Uleanya

Introduction

The expression “going green” is not so much of a new concept. Hence, there is need to establish that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remain a pivotal concept still seeking expression in different societies.

SDGs are so important and education is considered a major tool towards its realisation.



- Following the importance of education to achieving the SDGs, there was need to allow for the integration of sustainable development principles and practices into education in order to promote changes in different areas (UNESCO, 2014)
- Hence, 2005-2014 was declared a decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) by the United Nations.
- However, despite efforts made, poverty, unemployment and other issues are still prevalent in the African continent.

What could be wrong?

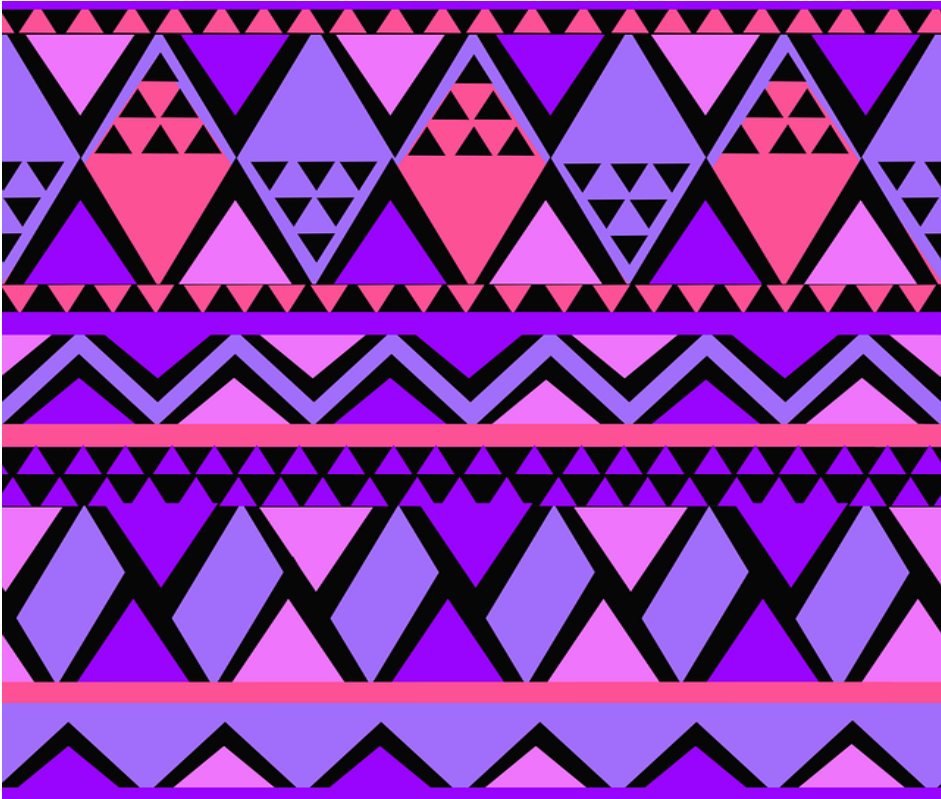
- There is need to ask the following questions considering our Eurocentric nature:
- Do we have the same challenges as the western world?
- Are African institutions not capable of helping themselves to proffer solutions to their own challenges?
- Can African nations really experience and enjoy sustainable development?

Flip side



- In the early 1960s when many African nations newly gained independence, a key term which was in existence was “Africanization”.
- Africanization was used to seek redress through institutions of learning in order to uphold our African norms, values, beliefs, among others

Education as tool for change



- Similarly, in the era of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Industrial Revolutions, education was used as a major tool to promote and facilitate the happenings of the era.
- These agree with the words of Nelson Mandela who states that “education is a tool for change”

Back to the present time

- If SDGs are to be achieved in our context, **our** education has a major role to play.
- In keeping to this, all education stakeholders have vital duties to perform.
- However, such duties may never be performed where the people involved do not even know their role(s).
- Hence, to set the stage, we are on a project which is aimed at exploring sustainability consciousness among education stakeholders in South Africa with specific emphasis on universities.

Sustainability is all encompassing



- Sustainability goes beyond learners/students, cuts across all spheres of the institutions of learning. Therefore, there is need to involve leaders such as principals, teachers, community members, etc.

Three questions for reflection



- How conscious are we (our institutions of learning) of sustainability?
- How are we infusing the African thoughts towards the attainment of sustainability in our context?
- If not yet, how can we infuse such?
- There is need to begin to consider this

Reality

- There is need to consider and explore ‘glocalization’ which implies using global standard to meet local needs/demands or solve our local problems, rather than always considering globalization which makes us end-up producing for the western world without focusing on ourselves.
- We can create the standard through glocalization
- It begins with us.
- Hence, sustainability consciousness is pivotal, especially in our African context.

Appreciation

Ngibona kakhulu

Thank you



THANK YOU!