

Rethinking the Paradigm of Economic Development: A Critical Examination of its Intersection with Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Quality Education

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Abstract

Quality education is an effective instrument for promoting economic development. It equips individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to secure improved employment, achieve higher earnings and contribute to the economy. This study critically analyses the relationship between economic development and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) – Quality Education within the context of education for sustainable development. It aims to explore the dearth of traditional economic development paradigms in promoting holistic human well-being and propose alternative approaches that prioritise high-quality education to achieve sustainable development. This study draws on the sustainable development concept articulated and expanded by various scholars in the literature that was reviewed. It further explores the principles of education for sustainable development (ESD) as outlined by UNESCO and analyses various economic frameworks such as the Green Economy, Well-being Economics and Doughnut Economics. As a conceptual study, the researcher reviewed existing literature on economic development, sustainable development and education. The study synthesises findings from various studies to critically analyse the interplay between economic growth and quality education. Furthermore, the findings emphasise the potential of ESD in promoting sustainable development. The analysis reveals that traditional economic development paradigms, which focus heavily on GDP growth, often neglect social equity and environmental sustainability, thereby resulting in a failure to advance holistic human well-being. In contrast, integrating quality education as a core component of development strategies may significantly contribute to the progress towards sustainable development. Education empowers individuals, by equipping them with knowledge and skills, encourages critical thinking and promotes environmental stewardship. As a result, education helps to align economic operations with broader social and environmental objectives. This study emphasises the need for policymakers to embrace holistic and inclusive approaches for economic

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development that give priority to quality education. Reforms in educational systems are necessary to prioritise critical thinking and sustainability. Additionally, investments should be made in teacher training and interdisciplinary learning. The findings support the need to transition from growth-centric development models that prioritise economic growth to models that consider and balance economic, social and environmental objectives, ensuring a future that is both sustainable and equitable.

Keywords:

Economic Development; Economic Growth; Sustainable Development; Sustainable Development Goals; Quality Education

1. Introduction

In the face of escalating global challenges such as climate change, social inequality and environmental degradation, the concept of sustainable development has garnered increasing attention from policymakers, academics and practitioners alike. According to Meadows et al. (1972), sustainable development represents a departure from the traditional paradigm of economic growth at all costs, advocating instead for a balanced approach that considers the social, environmental and economic dimensions of human well-being. At its core, sustainable development seeks to harmonise economic growth with social equity and environmental stewardship to ensure the well-being of present and future generations (World Commission on Environment & Development (WCED, 1987). Sustainable development recognises that economic prosperity cannot be sustained without addressing the underlying social injustices and environmental degradation that threaten the planet's health and resilience (Mensah & Casadevall, 2019). Thus, sustainable development encompasses a vision of progress that extends beyond mere GDP growth to encompass broader indicators of human flourishing, including access to education, healthcare and social support systems (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2012). Within this overarching framework, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) – Quality Education, emerges as a linchpin for achieving sustainable development (UN, 2016). Quality education is not only a fundamental human right but also a powerful catalyst for social transformation and economic

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development (Mbajiorgu & Mafumo, 2014; UN, 2018). Through empowering individuals with the knowledge, skills and values needed to navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world, quality education lays the foundation for building resilient, inclusive and sustainable societies (Cimene et al., 2023; Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019.). However, despite its critical importance, quality education remains elusive for millions of people around the world, particularly those living in poverty or marginalised communities (Zickafoose et al., 2024). Access to education is often hindered by factors such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, cultural barriers and discriminatory practices (Barrett et.al, 2019; Nwaham 2023; Ullah & Khan, 2023; Zickafoose et al., 2024). Moreover, the quality of education varies widely, with many students receiving an education that fails to equip them with the skills and competencies needed to thrive in the 21st century (Joynes et al., 2019). Against this backdrop, the relationship between economic development and quality education becomes increasingly pertinent (Hanushek, 2020). While economic development can create opportunities for expanding access to education and improving educational outcomes through increased investment in infrastructure, technology and human capital, it also raises important questions about the nature and purpose of education in a rapidly changing world (Valero, 2021). This study aims to answer these research questions: Is education merely a means to enhance economic productivity and competitiveness? Is it a broader instrument for promoting critical thinking, creativity and citizenship? Through a critical analysis, this study hopes to contribute to ongoing debates about the future of education and its role in shaping a more just, equitable and sustainable world.

2. Research Methodology

This study adopted a conceptual research methodology to critically explore how quality education, as defined by SDG 4, aligns with traditional economic development paradigms. Conceptual methodologies are particularly well-suited for analysing abstract and theoretical relationships, as they allow the researcher to synthesise existing literature to form a cohesive argument and propose new

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frameworks (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015; Jaakkola, 2020). This approach is important for questioning concepts such as sustainable development and quality education, where different factors interact within social, economic and environmental spheres.

2.1. Research Design and Approach

A qualitative, interpretive approach was utilised, primarily relying on literature review and conceptual synthesis as the central methodological tools. Conceptual research does not involve primary data collection but instead uses secondary sources—such as academic articles, policy documents and reports—to explore theoretical constructs and their interrelations (Jaakkola, 2020). This study's aim is to propose a meaningful understanding of economic development paradigms in the context of sustainable development through exploring how traditional models (focused on GDP) differ from or align with the aims of SDG 4. This design was selected for it benefit to enable a theoretical evaluation of economic paradigms and their impact on education without being confined to a particular geographical or contextual case, thus broadening the applicability of the findings (Gilson & Goldberg, 2015). It also allows for the identification of emergent frameworks such as the Green Economy and Doughnut Economics, which emphasises sustainable and inclusive growth (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD, 2019; Raworth, 2017).

2.2. Literature Review and Selection Criteria

The literature review was central to this methodology, providing the foundational context for the study. Three key areas of literature were reviewed to critically explore the interactions between economic development paradigms and educational goals as follows:

1. **Traditional Economic Development Paradigms:** Sources related to conventional economic models were selected based on their focus on GDP-centric growth and industrialisation (Purvis et al., 2019). The GDP-centric approach has been criticised for prioritising economic output over social welfare, neglecting aspects such as quality of life and environmental impact (Stiglitz et al., 2009). This review

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includes critiques from both social and environmental perspectives to explore the limitations of these models in advancing holistic human well-being.

2. Sustainable Development and Quality Education (SDG 4): Literature on SDG 4 was included to understand how quality education supports sustainable development. Quality education encompasses critical thinking, environmental stewardship and social responsibility, which are seen as integral to achieving sustainable societies (UN, 2016). The review draws on SDG 4 as a framework for discussing education's role in encouraging sustainability and critic the limitations of traditional economic models in supporting these educational outcomes (Saini et al., 2023).
3. Alternative Economic Models for Sustainable Development: The study also reviewed literature on alternative paradigms, including Green Economy, Well-being Economics and Doughnut Economics, to identify models prioritising human well-being and ecological balance (Raworth, 2017; UNEP, 2011). These frameworks challenge the traditional focus on GDP by advocating for inclusive and environmentally conscious economic approaches that support sustainable development (Stiglitz et al., 2009).

Relevant sources were drawn from academic databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar and SpringerLink, using search terms such as “sustainable development,” “SDG 4 quality education,” “GDP and education,” and “Green Economy.” Selection criteria prioritised recent publications, particularly those post-2015, to incorporate the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2.3. Conceptual Framework Analysis (CFA)

The analysis is structured using Jabareen's (2009) Conceptual Framework Analysis (CFA), an approach designed for synthesising interdisciplinary knowledge. CFA was selected due to its effectiveness in exploring relationships within multi-dimensional social phenomena, such as the interactions between economic paradigms and educational objectives. The framework involves the following stages:

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1. **Deconstructing Traditional Economic Paradigms:**
The first stage critiques GDP-centric models for their focus on economic output, often to the detriment of social and environmental welfare (Daly, 1996). This stage established a baseline for exploring how these models influence educational outcomes and sustainability (Purvis et al., 2019).
2. **Exploring Alternative Economic Models:**
The second stage of analysis assesses alternative economic models—Green Economy, Well-being Economics and Doughnut Economics—that integrate social and ecological objectives (Raworth, 2017). These models are explored for their compatibility with the goals of SDG 4, particularly in promoting quality education and supporting sustainable social structures (Stiglitz et al., 2009; OECD, 2019).
3. **Connecting Quality Education and Sustainable Development:**
Finally, the framework explores how quality education fosters sustainable development. Education, particularly in promoting critical thinking, environmental responsibility and social equity, is seen as a cornerstone of sustainability (UN, 2016). This section synthesises how both traditional and alternative economic models support educational outcomes aligned with sustainable development goals.

2.4. Methodological Limitations

As a conceptual study, this research does not involve empirical data collection or case studies, which limits the ability to generalise findings to specific contexts. Additionally, due to its reliance on secondary data, the study is constrained by the scope and focus of the existing literature. Future research could address these limitations by integrating empirical studies or case analyses to assess the real-world applicability of alternative economic models in supporting quality education.

3. Analysis and interpretation of the research data

This section provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the research data. The analysis builds on certain concepts found in research conducted by other scholars.

3.1 The Conventional Paradigm of Economic Development

Economic development is defined as the expansion of capacities that contribute to the advancement of society through the realisation of individuals', firms' and communities' potential (Feldman et al., 2016). Feldman et al. (2016) further states that economic development requires effective institutions grounded in norms of openness, tolerance for risk, appreciation for diversity and confidence in the realisation of mutual gain for the public and the private sector. Economic development, historically, has been synonymous with the pursuit of GDP growth, industrialisation and technological progress. This conventional approach places a heavy emphasis on increasing material wealth and production without necessarily considering the broader implications for human well-being and environmental sustainability (Purvis et al., 2019; O'Mahony, 2022). The prevailing paradigm of economic development often operates under the assumption that growth, measured primarily through GDP, is the key to prosperity and progress (O'Mahony, 2022).

However, this narrow focus on economic metrics fails to capture the problems of human development and societal well-being. Sen (1999) argued that development should be understood not just as economic growth, but as the expansion of capabilities and freedoms that enable individuals to lead lives they value. In other words, development should be concerned with enhancing people's quality of life, rather than simply increasing their material wealth. Moreover, the pursuit of relentless economic growth can have detrimental consequences for the environment and future generations (Ahmed et al., 2020). As Daly (1996) stated, the environmental limits of the planet impose constraints on endless growth and uncontrolled economic expansion may lead to resource depletion, pollution and ecosystem degradation. In support, Ganzleben et al. (2020) states that the environmental costs of economic development are often borne disproportionately by

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marginalised communities and future generations, intensifying social inequalities and intergenerational injustice.

Furthermore, the emphasis on GDP growth as the primary measure of progress overlooks the distributional aspects of development. Despite overall economic growth, many societies continue to grapple with persistent poverty, inequality and social exclusion (Francis & Webster, 2019). Tenai (2019) and Nussbaum (2003) emphasised the importance of addressing not just material deprivation, but also ability deprivation—the lack of opportunities and freedoms that prevent individuals from realising their full potential. Considering these critiques, there has been a growing recognition of the need to rethink the paradigm of economic development. Sachs (2016) proposed a new approach to development that integrates economic, social and environmental objectives within a framework of sustainable development. This entails pursuing not just GDP growth, but also social inclusion, environmental sustainability and human well-being (Sachs, 2016).

A holistic approach to economic development requires a shift from a purely growth-oriented mindset to one that prioritises human development and environmental stewardship (Bello, 2024). This involves investing in education, healthcare social protection and sustainable infrastructure to enhance people's capabilities and resilience (Brunner & Urenje, 2012). Brunner & Urenje (2012) extends that the holistic approach to economic development also entails adopting policies and institutions that promote equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, as well as sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems. The traditional paradigm of economic development, centred around GDP growth and industrialisation, is increasingly being challenged because of its environmental, social and distributional implications. Moving forward, there is a need for a more holistic and sustainable approach to development that prioritises human well-being, social equity and environmental sustainability. This requires redefining the goals and metrics of development, as well as reimagining the role of government, business and civil society in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable future.

3.2 The Interplay between Economic Development and Quality Education

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The relationship between economic development and quality education is indeed twisted and multifaceted, encompassing various dimensions that impact both sectors and consequently, societal progress (GGI insights, 2024). On one hand, economic development serves as a reactant for improving educational opportunities and outcomes (Pal, 2023; Goczek et al., 2021). Increased investment in education, facilitated by economic growth, may lead to the expansion of educational infrastructure, such as schools, libraries and technological resources (Barrett et al., 2019; [Teixeira et al., 2017](#)). Barrett et al. (2019) further states that this expansion not only enhances access to education but also improves the overall learning environment for students. Additionally, economic growth enables governments to allocate more resources towards teacher training and professional development programs, ensuring that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver quality education.

Moreover, economic development may fuel innovation and technological advancements in education, providing students with access to cutting-edge learning tools and resources (Haleem et al., 2022). For instance, advancements in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have revolutionised educational delivery methods, making learning more interactive, engaging and accessible to students from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Fu, 2013). However, despite these potential benefits, the pursuit of economic objectives may sometimes compromise the quality of education provided (Bell & Stevenson, 2006). In some cases, educational systems may prioritise rote memorisation and standardised testing over the promotion of critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills (Shafiyeva, 2021; Ongesa, 2020). This emphasis on exam-driven learning stifles students' intellectual curiosity and inhibits their ability to think independently and innovatively (Gravett, 2022).

Furthermore, challenges in educational access and outcomes often persist, even in the context of economic development (GGI insights, 2024; De Clercq, 2020). Marginalised communities, including those living in rural areas or urban slums, may still face barriers to accessing quality education due to factors such as poverty, lack of transportation and cultural norms (Okeowhor et al., 2019). As a result, these challenges perpetuate social inequalities and hinder efforts to achieve

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long-term sustainable development goals (GGI insights, 2024). To address these challenges, it is important to adopt a more holistic approach to education that prioritises both access and quality. This entails not only expanding educational opportunities but also ensuring that education is relevant, inclusive and tailored to meet the different needs of students. Additionally, efforts to improve education must be complemented by broader socio-economic policies aimed at reducing poverty, enhancing social inclusion and promoting equity in access to opportunities.

While economic development has a potential to create opportunities for expanding access to education and improving educational outcomes, it is necessary to recognise and address the challenges inherent in the interplay between economic development and quality education.

3.3 Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education

Recognising the important role of education in promoting sustainable development, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) stands as a beacon for global efforts to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (Adipat & Chotikapanich, 2022; UN, 2016). Sustainable development goal 4, represents a fundamental commitment to addressing the educational challenges that hinder social progress and economic prosperity across the globe (Saini et al., 2023). At its core, SDG 4 encapsulates a multifaceted agenda aimed at transforming education systems to meet the needs of many students in the 21st century (Sayed & Moriarty, 2020). Central to this agenda is the principle of universal access to education, which seeks to ensure that every individual, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or geographical location, has an equal opportunity to receive quality education (Saini et al., 2023; Adipat & Chotikapanich, 2022; UN, 2016). This commitment to inclusivity reflects a recognition of the transformative power of education in empowering individuals and communities to break the cycle of poverty, overcome barriers to social mobility and participate fully in civic life (Junjuna, 2023).

Moreover, SDG 4 emphasises the importance of promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all individuals, recognising that education is not confined to formal schooling but extends throughout the lifespan

(UN, 2016). Lifelong learning enables individuals to adapt to changing socio-economic contexts, acquire new skills, knowledge and contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of their communities (McGrath & Deneulin, 2021; Ahmed, 2014). Fostering a culture of lifelong learning, SDG 4 seeks to empower individuals to navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world, equipped with the competencies needed to address emerging challenges and seize opportunities for personal and professional growth (UN, 2019). In addition, to universal access and lifelong learning, SDG 4 prioritises the enhancement of educational quality as a key driver of sustainable development (UN, 2016). Quality education encompasses not only the acquisition of academic knowledge and skills but also the development of critical thinking, creativity and socio-emotional competencies (GGI insights, 2024). Quality education equips students with the tools and resources needed to engage meaningfully with the world around them, promoting a sense of agency and empowerment (Cimene et al., 2023).

Prioritising education as a fundamental human right and a driver of societal progress, SDG 4 stress the importance of investing in human capital to achieve sustainable development objectives (Grant, 2017). Education serves as a driver for poverty reduction, gender equality, health promotion, environmental sustainability and peacebuilding (Odera & Mulusa, 2020). As such, investments in education yield significant returns, not only in terms of individual well-being and economic prosperity but also in advancing the broader goals of sustainable development (Didham & Ofei-Manu, 2015). SDG 4 represents a bold and ambitious vision for the future of education, one that recognises the transformative power of education in shaping a more just, equitable and sustainable world (Junjuna, 2023; UN, 2016). Working together to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, governments, civil society organisations, teachers and other stakeholders can unlock the full potential of education for human development and social progress.

3.4 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) embodies a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to education, aiming to empower students with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to

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cultivate a more sustainable world (UNESCO, 2018). This transformative educational framework is rooted in principles of systems thinking, interdisciplinary learning and participatory decision-making, recognising the interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental systems (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019). ESD acknowledges the urgent need to address complex global challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss and social injustice, through informed action and collective responsibility (UNESCO, 2024; Pauw et al., 2015). Equipping individuals with the competencies to understand and navigate these challenges, ESD fosters resilience, innovation and positive change in communities worldwide (Pauw et al., 2015).

One of the defining features of ESD is its emphasis on holistic and experiential learning approaches that transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries (van den Berg & Verster, 2023; Parry & Metzger, 2023). Through hands-on activities, project-based learning and real-world applications, students are encouraged to explore the interconnected nature of sustainability issues and develop practical solutions to address them (Brunner & Urenje, 2012). Engaging with real-world problems in authentic contexts, students gain a deeper understanding of sustainability concepts and are better equipped to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways (Gamage et al., 2022). Furthermore, ESD promotes critical thinking, civic engagement and responsible citizenship by encouraging students to question prevailing norms and values, challenge inequitable systems and advocate for social and environmental justice (Marouli, 2021). Promoting a sense of agency and empowerment, ESD enables individuals to become active agents of change in their communities, driving positive transformation at local, national and global levels (Mehmood et al., 2020; Pauw et al., 2015).

Crucially, ESD recognises the importance of integrating sustainability principles across all levels of education, from early childhood to higher education and across formal, non-formal and informal learning settings (Holst, 2023; Van den Berg & Verster, 2023). Embedding sustainability into curricula, teaching practices and institutional policies, ESD ensures that students develop the knowledge, skills and values needed to navigate a rapidly changing world and contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and

broader sustainable development objectives (Gamage et al., 2022; Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019). ESD represents a paradigm shift in education, one that acknowledges the imperative of preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

3.5 Alternative Approaches to Economic Development

In contrast to conventional economic development paradigms, alternative approaches represent a paradigm shift towards prioritising human well-being and environmental sustainability over narrow measures of economic growth (Hirai & Barbier, 2022; Roy, 2016; Royal Government of Bhutan, 2012). These approaches recognise the inherent interconnectedness of social, economic and environmental systems and advocate for a more holistic and inclusive model of development that promotes social equity, ecological resilience and cultural diversity (Hariram et al., 2023; Purvis et al., 2019). One such alternative approach is the concept of the Green Economy, which seeks to reconcile economic prosperity with environmental sustainability by promoting resource efficiency, renewable energy and ecosystem conservation (UNEP, 2011). The Green Economy framework emphasises the importance of investing in green technologies, sustainable infrastructure and ecosystem services as means of encouraging economic development while minimising environmental degradation and resource depletion (Liu & Chen, 2023). Another alternative approach is Well-being Economics, which places human well-being and quality of life at the center of economic decision-making (Stiglitz et al., 2009). Well-being economics challenges the narrow focus on GDP growth as the sole measure of progress and advocates for broader indicators of societal well-being, including health, education, social cohesion and environmental quality (OECD, 2019). Prioritising the well-being of individuals and communities, well-being economics seeks to create more inclusive and equitable societies that prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable (OECD, 2019; van Niekerk, 2020). Doughnut Economics, a concept popularised by Raworth (2017), offers yet another alternative approach to economic development. Drawing on the metaphor of a doughnut, Doughnut Economics envisions a world where human needs are met without overshooting planetary boundaries (Raworth,

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2012). The inner ring of the doughnut represents the social foundation, ensuring that all individuals have access to basic needs such as food, water, healthcare and education (Cole, 2015; Raworth, 2012). The outer ring represents the ecological ceiling, beyond which human activities risk causing irreversible damage to the environment (Raworth, 2012). Striving to stay within the doughnut's boundaries, Doughnut Economics recommends a regenerative and distributive economy that promotes human well-being while respecting planetary boundaries (Raworth, 2012; Raworth, 2017).

These alternative approaches to economic development offer a promising pathway towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all. Reconceptualising the goals and metrics of economic progress, they challenge the prevailing paradigm of growth at all costs and offer innovative solutions for addressing pressing global challenges such as climate change, inequality and environmental degradation. Moreover, prioritising human well-being and ecological resilience, these approaches provide a framework for building more resilient, inclusive and prosperous societies that prioritise the needs of both current and future generations.

3.6 Policy Implications and Recommendations

To advance the agenda of sustainable development, policymakers need to recognise the important role of education as a fundamental driver of progress and prioritise investments in quality education and lifelong learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2024; Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019). This requires an inclusive approach that encompasses both formal and informal education systems, as well as lifelong learning opportunities that extend beyond traditional educational settings (Ng, 2023). First and foremost, policymakers need to undertake reforms to transform educational systems to meet the needs of the 21st century (Akgün & Alpaydın, 2022). This involves shifting away from rote memorisation and standardised testing towards pedagogies that emphasise critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills (Shafiyeva, 2021). Promoting a culture of inquiry and innovation, educational systems may empower students to become active agents of change and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development (Hays & Reinders, 2020). Furthermore, integrating sustainability principles across all levels of education is a

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necessity for building a more sustainable future (Pauw et al., 2015). This includes integrating topics such as climate change, biodiversity conservation and social justice into curricula and teaching materials, as well as promoting experiential learning opportunities that allow students to engage directly with sustainability issues in their communities (Yli-Panula et al., 2022). Moreover, governments, international organisations and civil society stakeholders need to collaborate with the departments of basic and higher education for sustainable development in national development agendas (Melo, 2018). This requires aligning policies and strategies with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG- 4) and broader sustainable development frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity (Moallemi et al., 2020; UN, 2016). The key policy recommendations include, investing in teacher training and professional development, promoting interdisciplinary and experiential learning, fostering partnerships and collaboration, ensuring equity and inclusivity and monitoring and evaluation.

3.7 Conclusion

The importance to pursue economic development must be reframed within the context of sustainable development, with quality education emerging as a cornerstone for achieving inclusive, equitable and environmentally sustainable societies. Throughout this discourse, it becomes evident that investing in education is not merely a means to an end, but a fundamental driver of social change and human development. Quality education may contribute to transforming societies, transcending the narrow confines of GDP-centric growth paradigms and embracing a more holistic vision of progress that prioritises the well-being of people and the planet alike. It is through education that individuals acquire the knowledge, skills and values necessary to navigate the challenges of the modern world, engage critically with global challenges and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development efforts. Investing in education, societies lay the foundation for building resilient, inclusive and sustainable communities. Education empowers individuals to break the cycle of poverty, overcome barriers to social mobility and participate actively

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in civic life. It fosters a sense of empathy, compassion and global citizenship, cultivating the values necessary for building a more just and equitable world. Moreover, education plays an important role in promoting environmental awareness and sustainable lifestyles. Integrating sustainability principles into curricula and teaching practices, education empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their consumption patterns, reduce their ecological footprint and advocate for environmental protection and conservation. However, achieving the vision of education for sustainable development requires concerted efforts from policymakers, teachers, civil society organisations and other stakeholders. It demands a commitment to reforming educational systems, investing in teacher training and professional development and promoting interdisciplinary and experiential learning approaches. Furthermore, integrating education, sustainability and economic development agendas is pertinent for building a more just, prosperous and sustainable world for future generations. Only through collective action and collaboration can we hope to address the challenges facing humanity and create a world that is inclusive, equitable and environmentally sustainable.

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