

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA TEACHER LEADERSHIP FOR EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SSATL-ESD)

Concept Note

1. Introduction

The **Sub-Saharan Africa Teacher Leadership for Education for Sustainable Development (SSATL-ESD)** project is a transformative initiative aimed at strengthening **teacher leadership in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region. This multi-country collaboration between 15 institutions from SSA and Europe empowers educators and teacher leaders with competencies to improve the next generation's knowledge, skills, and values for sustainable development, green economies, and culturally diverse and inclusive societies.

2. Background

By 2050, half of the world's youth will live in Africa, making education a critical driver of sustainable development. However, SSA faces a **teacher gap** — both in the number of educators and the quality of their training, as many educators lack the necessary competencies and resources available to integrate sustainability into their teaching.

Recognising these challenges, SSATL-ESD focuses on supporting **ESD Teacher Leadership** for actualising curriculum innovations, engaged and student-centred pedagogy and assessment innovations to advance multi-sector partnerships (e.g. with community, government and business partners in local contexts) around Change Projects that support human agency for change and sustainable development actions.

The project aligns with global frameworks such as the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly SDG 4.7, and African Union's (2023) Framework for Competences and Standards for the Teaching Profession.

3. Objectives

The **SSATL-ESD** project aims to:

- strengthen teacher leadership in ESD to drive curriculum innovation and transformative pedagogy,
- develop and implement Change Projects to empower academic teachers and students to further act as agents of change,
- establish digital learning hubs to support innovative teaching and assessment methods,
- enhance policy and institutional frameworks by aligning teacher training with sustainability goals,
- foster an international network of educators and institutions to share best practices and drive systemic change.

4. Project Approach

The project follows a structured approach that integrates research, curriculum innovation, professional development, and institutional capacity-building. It is organised into 8 Work Packages (WPs) that will be implemented in four phases.

*At the core of the project is the novel approach of the **ESD Change Project model**. This is an agency-based model that invites participating ESD Leaders to identify changes needed in their contexts and programmes and together with students and community stakeholders to address the required changes in their institutions and surroundings, leading to curriculum innovation. These initiatives are supported by hybrid learning environments and ICT integration, providing digital platforms and ICT-enabled learning hubs to enhance teaching capabilities and accessibility. The project places strong emphasis on multi-stakeholder collaboration, ensuring close cooperation between African and European higher education institutions, policymakers, and local communities to maximise impact and long-term sustainability.*

5. Project Partners

*The **SSATL-ESD** project is a collaborative initiative involving **15 partner institutions** from **Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe**, including **Leuphana University Lüneburg**, with Prof. Dr. Daniel Fischer as Principal Investigator and Lead of the project consortium, as well as Deepika Joon and Dr. Claire Grauer as Project Coordinators, and universities in **South Africa, Zambia, Namibia, Malawi, Kenya, Cyprus, and Greece**. Rhodes University, head by Distinguished Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka and Dr. Wilma van Staden, is leading the SSA consortium and act as focal contact point for SSA partners.*

The full list of project partners is:

- 1. Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany*
- 2. Heidelberg University of Education, Germany*
- 3. Frederick University, Cyprus*
- 4. University of Crete, Greece*
- 5. University of Namibia, Namibia*
- 6. Namibia University of Science and Technology, Namibia*
- 7. University of Malawi, Malawi*
- 8. The Catholic University of Malawi, Malawi*
- 9. Kenyatta University, Kenya*
- 10. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya*
- 11. University of Zambia, Zambia*
- 12. Copperbelt University, Zambia*
- 13. University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg, South Africa*
- 14. Rhodes University, South Africa*
- 15. Regional Center of Expertise on ESD, Greece*

Along with partner universities local stakeholders, students, community members, NGOs and business sector in SSA will be involved in the project. This diverse partnership fosters a cross-regional exchange of knowledge, expertise, and best practices to ensure that the project generates meaningful and lasting impact.

6. Expected Outcomes

By the end of the project, SSATL-ESD aims to create a strong network of ESD-trained teacher educators across partner institutions, with sustainability-driven curricula integrated into teacher education programmes. Over 1,200 teacher educators and students will benefit from capacity-building efforts, supported by the establishment of 10 ICT-enabled learning hubs that enhance innovative pedagogy. Furthermore, the project will contribute to the strengthening of policy frameworks to ensure the long-term integration of ESD into teacher education at national and regional levels.

7. Funding and Support

*The **SSATL-ESD** project is **co-funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ Programme**, which supports higher education capacity-building and international collaboration.*



Image: SSATL-ESD Partners Logos