

# Moving universities towards education for sustainable development

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Propositions accompanying the Ph.D. thesis

## **Moving universities towards Education for Sustainable Development**

By

Alejandro Álvarez-Vanegas

1. Universities have an immense opportunity to cultivate responsible citizens and skilled professionals who firmly contribute to the transition towards sustainable development. In times of acute socioecological challenges, harnessing this potential cannot be postponed (this thesis).
2. Incorporating pedagogical strategies that immerse students in real-world sustainability challenges is imperative to foster sustainability competences. Nonetheless, the success of such strategies hinges on university educators possessing a foundational set of sustainability competences (Chapter 2).
3. Integrating community action-oriented pedagogies such as Service-Learning can enhance the development of action competences for sustainability among university students. This approach cultivates empathy and willingness to engage in solving current sustainability challenges (Chapter 3).
4. Learning experiences centred on serving the planet and communities enable students to learn not only via the cognitive dimension (head), but also through the socioemotional (heart) and the attitudinal (hands) ones (Chapter 3).
5. While there is evidence of some knowledge and significant interest about Education for Sustainable Development among university educators, there remains considerable room for improvement (Chapter 4).
6. Capacity-building programmes for university educators holds promise in strengthening the cultivation of sustainability competences, especially when combined with hands-on practical components (Chapter 5).

7. There are clear avenues to amplify the contribution of universities to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG4, which focuses on education) and the UNESCO's ESD for 2030 programme (this thesis).
8. The most educated countries in the world have the largest ecological footprint. Thus, education must evolve to recognise that we humans are not only social, but also ecological beings.
9. "It is delightful to imagine that human nature can always be better developed through education [...]. This opens up the prospect of a future happy human race". Immanuel Kant<sup>1</sup>.
10. "In logical order, education should enable personal development, lead to the raising of good citizens and prepare efficient workers". Gabriel Jaime Arango Velásquez<sup>2</sup>.
11. "The university's responsibility to contribute to solving social problems of all kinds is unavoidable". Beatriz Restrepo Gallego<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Kant, I. (1803). *Über Pädagogik*.

<sup>2</sup> Arango Velásquez, G. J. (2017). *Valor social de la educación y la cultura*. Editorial Eafit.

<sup>3</sup> Restrepo Gallego, B. (2014). *Reflexiones sobre educación, ética y política*. Editorial Eafit.