DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL
TECHNOLOGY
AND COMMUNICATION

40 YEARS

UNIVERSITY OF THE
AEGEAN

SDG4: QUALITY EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF THE STUDENTS

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Introduction

- Higher education institutions adapting to evolving needs
- Focus on student-centered approaches
- Meaningful cross-cultural interactions in educational environments through social constructivist and connectivist frameworks

Challenge: Adopting modern approaches

21st century education objectives:

- Critical thinking
- Active citizenship
- Information accessibility

Need for university pedagogy adjustment

Emphasis on Transformation of learning for digital age

- Student motivation
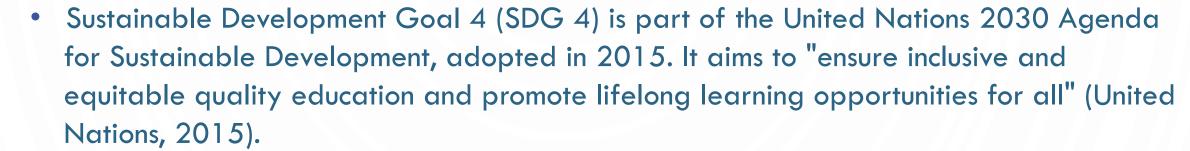- Learning experiences
- Self-assessment

SDG 4: Quality Education

What is SDG 4?

- Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is part of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015. It aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2015).

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SDG 4: Quality Education

Key Objectives of SDG 4:

- **Universal Access: Ensure all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education**
- **Early Childhood Development: Provide access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education**
- **Equal Access to Higher Education: Ensure equal access for all to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education,**
- **Skills for Employment: Increase the number of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship**
- **Equity and Inclusion: Eliminate gender disparities and ensure equal access for vulnerable populations**
- **Quality Learning Environments: Build and upgrade education facilities that are safe, inclusive, and effective.**

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Why SDG 4 Matters

- Quality education is not only a human right but also a driver of social transformation, sustainability, and innovation.

- SDG 4's Role in Sustainable Development:Education is fundamental to achieving other SDGs, as it empowers people to break cycles of poverty, reduces inequalities, promotes gender equality, enables healthier lives, and fosters peaceful societies (Eurostat, 2024).

Benefits

- **Ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education and lifelong learning for all.**
- **Education underpins every other Sustainable Development Goal.**
- **Builds knowledge, skills, and civic values needed for a sustainable society.**
- **Focus: learning outcomes, equity, and relevant vocational and digital skills.**

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Student Agency in Quality Education

- Student agency = the capacity of learners to make choices, act with purpose, and influence their learning environment.
- It includes voice, participation, co-design, and self-regulation.
- Empowering student agency leads to higher engagement, creativity, and social responsibility

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Students as Partners in Transformation

- Students are not passive recipients but co-creators of learning.
- They play key roles in:Co-designing curricula and assessments
- Peer mentoring and community outreach
- Participatory and action-based research
- Advocating for inclusion, accessibility, and sustainability

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Institutional Responsibilities

For universities to realize SDG 4, they must:

- Encourage inclusive and participatory decision-making.
- Provide teacher training for student-centred and project-based methods.
- Develop assessment systems valuing civic and transversal skills.
- Fund student-led initiatives connected to real-world change.

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Challenges to Address

- Avoid tokenistic "student voice" without real influence.
- Ensure equity in participation—especially for marginalized groups.
- Align curricula, assessment, and institutional structures with SDG 4.

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Call to Action

Students are key partners in achieving SDG 4.

- Together, institutions and learners can:
- Design inclusive, interdisciplinary, and sustainable learning experiences.
- Connect classroom learning to community action.
- Promote lifelong learning that supports social transformation.

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ERUA and SDGS

European University Alliances are explicitly designed to address the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Many alliances have integrated SDG-driven approaches into their mission statements, with particular emphasis on SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption), and other sustainability goals (Moser et al., 2021; Charret & Maassen, 2022).

- Flexible Learning Pathways and Mobility
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Educational Innovation
- Research on Educational Quality Digital Innovation and Accessibility

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THANK YOU!

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