

A PROPOSAL FOR RECALIBRATING SDG 4.7

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Abstract: A 2020 report from Philip Alston, the former United Nations' (UN) Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, claims that to 'avoid sleepwalking towards assured failure while pumping out endless bland reports' supporters of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) need to focus on 'new strategies, genuine mobilization, empowerment, and accountability' (Alston, 2020: 20). This article explores what such a 'recalibration' of SDG 4.7 might look like by drawing on resources from contemporary social epistemology to propose a criterion for assessing whether frameworks for implementation are genuinely transformational.

First, I reiterate the central role that education plays in Agenda 2030, and outline Alston's imperative for recalibrating the SDGs. Second, I propose that any recalibration of SDG 4.7 should involve grounding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in terms of epistemic responsibility. Third, I propose a criterion for assessing the transformative capacity of frameworks for the implementation of SDG 4.7 by adopting and developing Sanford Goldberg's notion of epistemic responsibility, which is illustrated by reference to the work of the recent global citizenship education (GCE) advocacy project Bridge 47.

In this way, the article provides a novel response to recent developments in high-level strategies to combat social injustice and climate change at a global scale. While it does not attempt an in-depth assessment of the UN's latest framework for implementation of Education for Sustainable Development, it develops and motivates a promising criterion to be used for such assessments hereafter.

Key words: Sustainable Development Goals; SDG 4.7; Education for Sustainable Development; Responsibility; Theory of Change.

Introduction

Over the past 12 months there have been a number of major developments that pertain to education's role, via the United Nations' Agenda 2030, in achieving a socially just and sustainably developed world. In the summer of 2020, the former United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Philip Alston, produced a report highlighting the imperative for 'recalibrating' the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Alston, 2020: 20). In May 2021, an ambitious new framework for achieving SDG 4.7, the Education for Sustainable Development 2030 Roadmap, was launched by the United Nations (UNESCO, 2020). Insofar as Alston's call for a recalibration of the SDGs is well-motivated, this article seeks to re-evaluate SDG 4.7 by articulating a hitherto undiagnosed issue with its conception of epistemic responsibility, and in doing so propose a criterion for assessing implementation frameworks for SDG 4.7. I base my diagnosis and proposal on one of Alston's main points of critique of the SDGs: their shortcomings with respect to empowerment, accountability and genuine mobilisation (Alston, 2020: 12). To this end, the article consists of three parts: (i) an introduction to Sanford Goldberg's account of epistemic responsibility, and an argument for its relevance to recalibrations of SDG 4.7; (ii) positioning Goldberg's notion of epistemic responsibility in relation to the literature on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and the role of ESD within the history of the UN's strategies for achieving sustainable development; and (iii) proposing a criterion for assessing the transformative capacity of frameworks for the implementation of SDG 4.7 that is based on Goldberg's notion of epistemic responsibility, with reference to the work of the recent global citizenship education (GCE) advocacy project Bridge 47.

The role of education in Agenda 2030

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (or Agenda 2030) was launched in 2015 by the United Nations to 'end poverty and set the world on a path of peace, prosperity and opportunity for all on a healthy planet' (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). It was agreed upon and adopted by all 193 member states of the United Nations. As well as outlining all adoptees' broad commitment to sustainable development, it outlined 17 Sustainable

Development Goals and 169 targets that must be met for the Goals to be achieved (Ibid.).

Each one of the 17 SDGs cover broad areas for improving sustainable development by 2030, with SDG 4 addressing education by aiming to ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ (Ibid.: 17). SDG 4 consists of seven targets, with SDG 4.7 focusing on capacity building via education as follows:

“by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development” (Ibid.: 17).

While not explicitly mentioned in the Agenda 2030 Declaration, the role of global education (GE) in achieving SDG 4.7 is undeniable. To understand why this is, we need only consider GE’s definition under the landmark 2002 Maastricht Global Education Declaration: ‘education that opens people’s eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all’ (Maastricht Declaration, 2002). The Maastricht Declaration built upon the 1997 Council of Europe’s Global Education Charter to provide ‘a framework for the improvement of global education at the European level’, with its definition of GE widely used in contemporary discourse to this day (Georgescu, 1997; Council of Europe, 2021; Bridge 47, 2018). The Declaration states that GE is understood to encompass numerous other educational movements and approaches that meet the definition of GE, including development education (DE), global citizenship education (GCE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (Ibid). Since ESD is the term most widely used in the context of recent United Nations’ documentation relating to SDG 4.7, I will

herein primarily be referring to ESD (albeit on the condition that it is broadly interchangeable with GE, GCE and DE).

It is also important to note that the Agenda's original 'Framework to Action' document for SDG 4, the Incheon Declaration, states the indispensability of GE to the entire Agenda in no uncertain terms:

“Education is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and essential for the success of all SDGs...In fact, education can accelerate progress towards the achievement of all of the SDGs and therefore should be part of the strategies to achieve each of them” (UNESCO, 2015: 24).

Hence why SDG 4.7 is not only important in itself as a target to improve the quality of, and access to, education, along with the SDG's other 168 targets. But both Agenda 2030 and the original framework for implementation for SDG 4 make clear that the success of all other SDGs (i.e. the concrete aims of Agenda 2030) are contingent upon achieving the targets of SDG 4. On its own terms, then, Agenda 2030 makes clear that success in achieving SDG 4 – and by extension SDG 4.7 – is essential to the success of all other SDGs.

Agenda 2030 and the imperative for 'recalibration'

In the summer of 2020, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Philip Alston, produced a report on global efforts toward poverty eradication (Alston, 2020). The report presented a wide-ranging critique of the narrow and simplistic *status quo* understandings of poverty eradication used by the World Bank and other multilateral bodies engaged in the delivery of the SDGs. Alston articulates part of his critique specifically in terms of the SDGs cautioning that, while they 'have achieved a great deal, they are failing in relation to key goals' (Ibid: 1). His critique of the SDGs is premised on three key fundamental shortcomings: (i) their lack of adequacy and impact 'by design' (Ibid.: 11); (ii) their 'unrealised transformative potential' (Ibid.: 12); and (iii) their limited ability to respond to

technological developments and the fallout from the COVID-19 crisis (Ibid.: 14).

Importantly, however, Alston's critique does not suggest an abandonment of the SDGs altogether (Ibid.: 14). This is primarily because he acknowledges that it has 'been a game-changer in important ways and has been used to very good effect in many settings' (Ibid.: 10). He notes their particular value as a means of mainstreaming discussions about issues such as poverty reduction at the highest levels of decision-making and agenda-setting, since they are undeniably now 'the dominant framework through which poverty eradication efforts and development policy are structured at the global level' (Ibid.: 10). Hence, Alston calls for a 're-evaluation' and, ultimately, 'recalibration' of the SDGs which would both retain their high-level influence and resolve the problems identified in his critique (Ibid.).

While Alston makes several conclusions in his report, his argument for recalibrating the SDGs is premised on the need for 'new strategies, genuine mobilization, empowerment and accountability', all of which are central to his notion of 'unrealized transformative potential' (Ibid.: 20). Alston suggests how such factors have thus far been 'marginalized' either from the SDG's inception, or throughout their implementation. Empowerment, he argues, has been undermined by the fact that 'space for meaningful democratic engagement is shrinking dramatically', and is exacerbated by either the laxity or active suppression of such spaces by governments (Ibid.: 12). Accountability for delivering on the goals is currently characterised by 'its voluntary nature, deference to national choices, and institutional arrangements that minimize opportunities for sustained scrutiny', meaning that they are 'rarely critical or focused, and they often hide behind jargon' (Ibid.: 14). Taken together, Alston claims that these deficiencies with respect to empowerment and accountability enable the 'deep deficit of political motivation' that systematically limits the SDG's potential to transform societies to mere rhetoric (Ibid.: 20). Thus, to convert this rhetoric into genuine mobilisation on the scale required - and the scale suggested by Agenda 2030 itself - a robust theory of social change is needed that increases empowerment

and accountability of all stakeholders in the Agenda. Hence, insofar as Alston's critique is well-motivated (both his indictment of it *and* his acknowledgement of its value in advancing social justice and sustainable development) there is a clear imperative to address the issues he identifies with respect to 'genuine mobilization, empowerment and accountability' (Ibid.: 20).

While Alston does not specify what conception of 'public' he is referring to, it seems reasonable to suppose that he is referring to the 'general public' as the assembly of citizens who are not directly preoccupied with Agenda 2030. For my purposes here, I understand a member of the 'public' to be any citizen whose engagement with Agenda 2030 is *only* via the 'public sphere' in Habermas' sense. Adopting Habermas' conception of the public sphere here is crucial as it enables focusing on the majority of citizens who do not have information concerning Agenda 2030 made available to them 'like business or professional people transacting private affairs', as those individuals directly involved in implementing Agenda 2030 do have (Habermas, Lennox and Lennox, 1974: 49). In this way we can separate 'the public' as a distinct body of citizens who are only guaranteed information about Agenda 2030 through what they encounter in the public sphere, thereby putting an obligation on those other groups of citizens (e.g. public officials or members of civil society) to produce relevant information that is not limited to their respective private spheres by being accessible to all members of the public sphere.

One constructive response to Alston's critique, I submit, is to explore the role of education in 'recalibrating' the SDGs. This is primarily for two reasons: (i) the undeniable centrality of education to Agenda 2030, as outlined in the previous section, and (ii) the distinct potential that SDG 4.7 has to address issues surrounding empowerment, accountability and genuine mobilization for Agenda 2030. In what follows, I suggest that one fundamental issue with SDG 4.7 at present is its implementation, and that this issue lies in an inadequate conception of what constitutes individual responsibility for implementing Agenda 2030 for members of the public. To this end, I use conceptual resources from social epistemology to both diagnose this issue and

to propose a reconceptualization of individual epistemic responsibility that reaffirms the centrality of SDG 4.7 (and thus ESD), to achieving Agenda 2030.

The relevance of epistemic responsibility in recalibrating SDG 4.7

Alston's critique of the SDGs raises the question of what an effective recalibration of SDG 4.7 would constitute. According to common understandings of ESD enshrined in the Maastricht Declaration, the Incheon Declaration, and in SDG 4.7 itself, it is clear that sufficient awareness of relevant topics is required to achieve sustainable development. Indeed, the very notion of placing importance on ESD presupposes that for individuals to act in ways that achieve sustainable development, they need to receive some form of appropriate education rather than simply acting upon their current levels of awareness. This centring of awareness highlights the key role that knowledge plays in ESD.

We can draw clear parallels with the literature on epistemic responsibility, which spawns from the conviction that to have adequate conceptions of what it means to act responsibly, we must first have an adequate understanding of what it is to engage with knowledge responsibly. As Gideon Rosen observes, 'Ordinary morality, like the law, operates with a defeasible presumption of responsibility' (Rosen, 2004: 61). That is, when we ordinarily hold individuals morally responsible for an act, we are open to revising that judgement considering excusing factors. To borrow Rosen's example, if we overhear that someone stole something from a corner shop, we will revise our moral judgement of them in light of 'any fact that defeats the standing presumption of responsibility' - for example that the culprit is five years old or is a kleptomaniac. The importance of epistemic factors is clear in such cases, since a legitimate deficit in awareness does not just potentially excuse an act, but it can also lead to incorrect judgements about that act. Understanding ESD in terms of epistemic responsibility, then, views the fundamental value of ESD as removing excuses for not being aware of evidence that would compel them to promote sustainable development.

It might be argued, however, that grounding ESD in terms of epistemic responsibility risks encouraging what Vanessa Andreotti has termed ‘soft global citizenship’ (Andreotti, 2006). For Andreotti, we cannot accept global citizenship education as that which simply increases individuals’ awareness of issues and willingness to act on them (Ibid.: 46-48). Andreotti contrasts this with ‘critical global citizenship’, which ‘tries to promote change [...] by creating spaces where [learners] are safe to analyse and experiment with other forms of seeing/thinking and being/relating to one another’ (Ibid.: 49). This view focusses ‘on the historical/cultural production of knowledge and power in order to empower learners to make better informed choices’ without prescribing what these changes should be’ (Ibid.). On this basis Andreotti concludes that, although the ‘soft’ view ‘is appropriate to certain contexts - and can already represent a major step’, without the ‘critical’ view we ‘run the risk of (indirectly and unintentionally) reproducing the systems of belief and practices that harm those [we] want to support’ (Ibid.). Hence there seems to be a reasonable objection to any proposal to ground ESD in terms of epistemic responsibility: if epistemic responsibility simply deals in terms of whether an individual is aware of certain facts or not, doesn’t it risk promoting a purely ‘soft global citizenship’?

However, these concerns can be readily addressed by two considerations. Firstly, Andreotti acknowledges that ‘soft global citizenship’ can represent a major step in certain contexts. For instance, to be critical about one’s views on development, one first needs to have a basic grasp of certain facts about development, which could be learned via the ‘soft’ approach. Moreover, insofar as I am concerned with the lack of public awareness of Agenda 2030, I am not primarily concerned with levels of ‘critical literacy’ but rather levels of basic understanding. Indeed, as Odell et al. note in their recent discussion of ‘transformative learning’ within the context of the SDGs, fundamentally such learning is understood as a ‘process by which individuals acquire knowledge and skills’ (Odell et al., 2020: 1). Moreover, Moacir Gadotti understands ESD as aiming ‘to help people to acquire applicable knowledge and to empower them to act responsibly’ (Gadotti, 2010: 232). While these perspectives should not be taken to endorse a neglect of critical

literacy (see for example Sterling, 2016), there is a clear precedent within the ESD literature to support Andreotti's point that simply acquiring relevant knowledge is important in certain contexts. Secondly, as I will now argue, a recent account of epistemic responsibility not only allows for, but highlights the importance of, 'critical literacy' in Andreotti's sense whilst also addressing concerns about levels of public awareness.

Goldberg's account of epistemic responsibility

Sanford Goldberg's recent work on epistemic responsibility seems capable of highlighting the importance of 'critical literacy' as well as basic levels of awareness concerning sustainable development amongst the public. This is primarily due to Goldberg's grounding epistemic responsibility in the expectations that we have of one another as epistemic agents, his distinction between legitimate and illegitimate expectations, and his notion of epistemic communities. On this basis, I suggest that Goldberg can provide a compelling epistemic account of how we might achieve Alston's imperative for the 'genuine mobilization of the public' behind the SDGs.

Epistemic expectations

Contrary to more traditional accounts of epistemic responsibility, Goldberg argues that epistemic responsibility should be understood as fundamentally *social*, such that it reflects the social nature of human interactions with the world. There are two kinds of expectations of others that he says underpin a social epistemic responsibility: the basic and the non-basic or general. Goldberg claims that we are entitled to have basic epistemic expectations of one another 'merely in virtue of the fact that we are epistemic subjects who depend on one another for information about our shared world' (Goldberg, 2018: 150). Such expectations concern how others form, sustain, and revise their system of beliefs, enabling us to expect others to use reliable belief-forming processes so that they 'produce true beliefs' (Ibid.: 105). Goldberg claims that we are entitled to such basic expectations of one another because the absence of such entitlement 'calls into question something that is part and parcel of our everyday practice of relying on others' say-so' (Goldberg, 2017:

2880). This in turn ‘undermine[s] a core part of our epistemic (information-gathering) practices as a social species’ (Ibid.: 2881). In this way, these core criteria reflect a requirement of reliability and a minimal form of responsibility in belief-formation and maintenance: every epistemic subject, by definition, must meet these basic expectations. When these expectations are not met, then, we are epistemically irresponsible on a basic level.

However, Goldberg claims that ‘our epistemic expectations of one another go far beyond the basic’ (Goldberg, 2018: 160) and into ‘non-basic’ or ‘general’ expectations (Ibid.). While basic epistemic expectations must be satisfied to be ‘qualified’ as a properly functioning epistemic subject, general expectations must be fulfilled to qualify as a reliable epistemic subject within certain epistemic domains (Ibid.: 56). General expectations highlight how, in addition to meeting basic requirements as an epistemic subject, we each may have additional social-epistemic roles conferred by our respective social circumstances. Thus, the full picture of epistemic expectations demands that we recognise ‘insofar as a given role makes epistemic demands of you, playing that role properly requires satisfying the epistemic demands in question’ (Ibid.: 161). It is worth noting here that, by highlighting the importance of social roles in attributions of responsibility, Goldberg’s account is potentially compatible with Robin Zheng’s (2018) recent critique of Iris Marion Young’s (2011) Social Connections Model of responsibility for structural injustices.

Legitimate and illegitimate epistemic expectations

Crucial to Goldberg’s account of epistemic responsibility is another distinction he makes between legitimate and illegitimate epistemic expectations. This distinction accounts for the fact that while we all make, and are subject to, expectations of others, these expectations will not always be ‘legitimate’. An illegitimate general expectation will vary depending on the individual or community concerned. For example, the expectation to know the distinction between supply and demand in neoclassical economics is illegitimate for primary school students, but legitimate for university graduates of economics. Thus, to avoid committing individuals to being responsible for meeting

illegitimate expectations, a necessary condition for being epistemically responsible for something is that it is premised on a legitimate expectation of one given one's social role.

We have just seen via an example how this distinction works on the intuitive level, but what exactly makes a general expectation legitimate? Goldberg's answer to this is straightforward: such expectations' 'legitimacy and our entitlement to have them derive from the legitimacy of our social practices' (Goldberg 2018: 165). In other words, we can source the legitimacy of general epistemic expectations in the legitimacy of the social practices that enable them in the first place. For instance, as a society we deem practices such as secondary and tertiary education from recognised institutions as legitimate (this is what confers value to the pieces of paper with grades or diplomas); the social practice of attending university represents a legitimised social practice (rightly or wrongly) of gaining a certain amount of knowledge in one's degree subject. Thus, insofar as there is a legitimate social practice that confers epistemic content, we can have legitimate epistemic expectations of individuals or communities participating in that practice. In Goldberg's words, then, 'epistemic responsibility is ensured by a subject's having lived up (or not) to all of the epistemic expectations others were entitled to have of her on the matter in question' (Ibid.: 183). Thus, our respective 'social epistemic responsibilities' are the collection of general expectations others legitimately have of us.

It is this conception of epistemic responsibility that enables us to diagnose an epistemic problem for Agenda 2030 and, in doing so, enables us to recalibrate SDG 4.7. The problem is this: despite increasingly ambitious strategies for implementing SDG 4.7, there is currently no legitimate social practice whereby the public, in their social role as citizens, are expected to be aware of Agenda 2030 and how to achieve it. We can trace the precedent for establishing social practices to promote ESD back to Recommendation 96 of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, which was to establish educational programmes 'directed towards the general public [...] with a view to educating him as to the simple steps he

might take, within his means, to manage and control his environment’ (UN, 1972: 24).

In more recent years, a pattern has emerged of increasingly ambitious frameworks without significant tangible changes. The Incheon Declaration recognised how education facilitates a sense of citizenship that is ‘vital for achieving social cohesion and justice’ (UNESCO, 2015: 25) and its indicative strategies included ‘system-wide interventions’ via implementing the Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP) (Ibid.: 50). The Global Action Programme on ESD, endorsed by UNESCO in 2013, stated that a sustainable world ‘requires changes in the way we think and act’ by ‘mainstreaming ESD’ (UNESCO, 2014: 32; 14). Most recently, in mid-May 2021 the ‘ESD for 2030’ framework and its Roadmap for Implementation were formally recognised by UNESCO as the guiding documents for the next decade’s mobilisation on ESD (UNESCO, 2021a). The ESD Roadmap was launched as a follow up to the GAP with the stated objective to ‘fully integrate ESD and the 17 SDGs into policies, learning environments, capacity-building of educators, the empowerment and mobilization of young people, and local level action’ (Ibid.: 16). It claims to build upon the lessons learned from the GAP, due to the ‘increased importance placed on ESD to promote the contribution of learning content to the survival and prosperity of humanity’ (Ibid.: 4). The tone of the Roadmap is markedly more demanding and urgent:

“What we know, what we believe in and what we do needs to change. What we have learned so far does not prepare us for the challenge. This cannot go on... We must urgently learn to live differently” (Ibid.: 4).

Despite these undeniably extensive and increasingly ambitious strategies for mainstreaming ESD to achieve SDG 4.7, numerous indicators highlight how far off target we are. The Incheon Declaration itself acknowledged that, at the time of publication, education systems ‘seldom fully integrate such transformative approaches’ and that ‘only 50% of UNESCO’s Member States indicate that they have integrated ESD into relevant policies’

(UNESCO 2015: 49). In early 2021, UNESCO's 'global review of how environmental issues are integrated into education' found that while almost every one of the 'policy and curriculum documents' that they analysed 'included at least one reference to environmental themes...the depth of inclusion was very low on average' (UNESCO, 2021b: 9). The best category available to the documents analysed was 'moderate' depth of inclusion (meaning 1,000 per every million words), which only 17 per cent of the documents satisfied. Furthermore, only one in four Education Sector Plans, which 'tend to be broader, longer-term policy documents articulating a vision for a country's education system and how to achieve it', contained references to environment related topics (Ibid.: 24). The report also identified 'numerous logistical, social and political barriers to inclusion of environmental content in education' (Ibid.: 27).

If such deficiencies are the norm of current high-level ESD implementation, it hardly seems reasonable to expect the public to be adequately aware of the issues required for legitimate epistemic expectations pertaining to sustainable development. Thus, when we remind ourselves that since its inception, Agenda 2030 expects a high degree of stakeholder involvement and, in SDG 4.7, expects 'all learners' to be able to contribute to sustainable development by 2030, it seems hard to avoid calling this an illegitimate expectation of the public.

Insofar as we accept Goldberg's account of epistemic responsibility, then, there appears to be no epistemic basis for holding the public responsible for achieving sustainable development. In this way we can clearly see how genuine mobilisation, empowerment and accountability will be marginalised and the transformative potential of Agenda 2030 unrealised. For how can citizens be empowered by an Agenda that they are not being made aware of? Moreover, how can they hold fellow citizens, and those in positions of political or capital power accountable for implementing an Agenda they are not being made aware of?

In diagnosing this problem, the source of the problem becomes apparent: the lack of a legitimate social practice concerning sustainable development that the public *qua* citizens can engage in. Thus, on Goldberg's view it appears the fundamental problem with Agenda 2030 identified above – its illegitimate epistemic expectations of the public - can only be remedied by providing such a practice.

Achieving 'genuine mobilization' through increased legitimate epistemic expectations

Insofar as general epistemic expectations vary based on what epistemic domain we are in, we can say that the legitimacy of such expectations vary from epistemic community to epistemic community. Thus, in Goldberg's terms, 'The result is that what it takes to be epistemically responsible in one community can differ from what it takes in another community' (2018: 240). In order to respond to the objection that his view results in full-blown relativism about epistemic responsibility, Goldberg endorses what he calls 'community-sensitive invariantism [(CSI)] regarding epistemic responsibility' (Ibid.: 241). CSI enables epistemic responsibility to both be sensitive to the specific conditions of one's community, whilst also fixing the conditions for epistemic responsibility across communities where similar conditions are present. To use an example in the educational context: insofar as I have epistemic expectations of students in my school to not cheat during exams, this expectation holds for all students *qua* students, regardless of their school.

Moreover, we can refer back to Andreotti to illustrate the value of this distinction within the context of ESD. Andreotti begins her critique of 'soft global citizenship education' by recalling her discomfort with a 'Make Poverty History' workshop for activists, since 'the group seemed to be unaware that the thought patterns and effects of "what they love doing" could be directly related to the causes of the problems they were trying to tackle in the first place' (Andreotti, 2006: 40-41). Goldberg's account enables us to legitimately expect more of this group of individuals, as they claim to be engaged in development issues. In this context, we can see how increased epistemic

expectations of such a group supports Andreotti's calls for increased 'critical literacy' from those who claim to be actively engaged in development work. Moreover, Goldberg's account allows us to legitimately expect more of such individuals, without needing to expect so much of everyone else, thereby avoiding cases where we have unreasonable expectations of the public to have 'critical literacy'. This point is neatly summed up by Goldberg when he concludes that 'the standards for epistemic responsibility derive from the relevant communities, but the right to hold the subject to those standards is universal' (Goldberg, 2018: 242).

I propose that CSI can be used to motivate arguments for 'expanding communities' regarding awareness of social injustices and climate change, thereby motivating arguments for proponents of ESD. In this sense, it seems that we can 'expand the community' of those we legitimately expect to be epistemically responsible about understanding a given issue from just those experts whose profession or preoccupation it is to understand it, to include non-experts who encounter that issue simply as members of the public who are connected to it insofar as they are global citizens. In this way, we could then not only expect the public to be aware of basic aspects of ESD, but also to exercise 'critical literacy' of their awareness. If such community-expansion is consistent with Goldberg's conception of epistemic responsibility, then it seems to me to be a promising way of remedying the problem for Agenda 2030 diagnosed above.

On this basis, we can conceive of the project of genuinely mobilising and empowering citizens as a question of creating a legitimate social practice that exposes them, *qua* citizens, to issues of sustainable development and social justice. In doing so, we gain a means for holding the public epistemically responsible (consistent with their other social roles) for mobilising behind Agenda 2030. It is on this basis, I submit, that Goldberg's conception of epistemic responsibility not only enables us to articulate the epistemic dimension of Alston's critique of Agenda 2030, but in doing so suggests that a remedy might be the generation of new social practices through adequate provision of ESD. In this way, proponents of mainstreaming ESD in

education systems gain a novel argument that does not rely on any political, potentially polarising view about achieving sustainable development.

Successful community expansion: Bridge 47

What might such ‘community expansion’ look like in practice in the context of SDG 4.7? While this question cannot be explored in adequate detail here, it is worth briefly referencing a promising example in Bridge 47. Bridge 47 was a project, co-created by 14 European and global organisations, with the aim of coordinating the mobilisation of civil society to achieve SDG 4.7 (Bridge 47, 2021). This was primarily carried out through dissemination of research, advocating for ‘better policies that reflect the role of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in making sustainable development possible’, and facilitating inter-organisation and intersectoral partnerships that spread awareness about GCE (Ibid.). The project, which started in October 2017 and ended in August 2021, included two global networks, two national development education networks, two European research networks and six national civil society platforms.

Bridge 47 was premised on the conviction that GCE needs ‘to be reflected in the objectives and practices of policymakers, governments, civil society organisations and communities’ if we are to achieve sustainable development (Ibid.). To this end, Bridge 47 divided its advocacy work into three parts: diversifying GCE so that it is inclusive and accessible, communicating the value of GCE, and increasing capacity for GCE by running trainings, publishing and sharing tools for GCE advocacy. Through its partnership work, the project sought to connect GCE advocates and practitioners to so-called ‘external audiences’ who were unfamiliar with GCE. The extent of the Bridge 47 network and its commitment to a critical and robust understanding of GCE and SDG 4.7 enabled it to advocate for genuinely transformative policy changes that are aligned with Agenda 2030. This is exemplified by the recommendation paper that was the outcome of its 2019 Envision 4.7 conference held in Helsinki (Bridge 47, 2019). The paper begins by explicitly reaffirming the attendees’ commitment to SDG 4.7, before stating that ‘Urgent action is required in Europe to meet our responsibilities to reach

this target’ (Ibid.: 2). On this basis, the paper makes two general recommendations: (i) ‘a pan-European overarching strategy for Target 4.7 needs to be developed at the latest by 2021’, and (ii) ‘European, national and sub-national educational policies should take into consideration the need for [...] education to have a coherent and inclusive approach [...] across all levels of education’ (Ibid.: 2). The document goes on to make five specific recommendations, each with their own subsections, to provide comprehensive guidance on delivering the general recommendations.

This is the kind of framework construction and implementation that appears to constitute ‘community expansion’ with respect to awareness of sustainable development and social justice. While we await an evaluation of the delivery of Bridge 47, the results to date suggest that it has succeeded in combining standalone awareness-raising initiatives with a fundamentally structural approach to promoting GCE (i.e. ‘expanding the community’ of whom we can legitimately expect to be aware of GCE) in order to achieve SDG 4.7.

It must be acknowledged that, in its recent *Stakeholder Engagement and the 2030 Agenda: A Practical Guide*, the UN does suggest its awareness of the importance of community expansion in its ‘theory of participation’, when it highlights the importance of a ‘whole of society approach’ to transformational change (United Nations 2020: 45). However, each of its references to education *simpliciter*, never mind structural changes to education systems, are passing. One hopes that the subsequent ESD Roadmap for 2030 represents a watershed moment in centring ESD in the UN’s strategy for implementing SDG 4.7. But, as we have seen in recent years with Agenda 2030, perceived watershed moments will remain as mere perceptions unless we constantly subject them to critique and demand that their rhetoric is matched in practice.

Conclusion

This article aimed to respond to recent developments in ESD's role in achieving social justice and sustainable development by reevaluating the implementation of SDG 4.7. To this end, the article was composed of three parts. First, I reiterated the central role that education plays in Agenda 2030, and outlined Alston's imperative for recalibrating the SDGs. Second, I proposed that any recalibration of SDG 4.7 should involve grounding ESD in terms of epistemic responsibility. Third, I proposed a criterion for assessing the transformative capacity of frameworks for the implementation of SDG 4.7 by adopting and developing Goldberg's notion of epistemic responsibility, with a brief reference to the work of Bridge 47. In this way, the article has provided a novel response to recent developments in efforts to combat social injustice and climate change at a global scale. While I have not attempted an in-depth assessment of the UN's latest framework for implementation of ESD, I hope to have developed and motivated a promising criterion to be used for such assessments hereafter.

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