The Role of Universities in Teaching Sustainable Development

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The increasing competition in international market and development of advanced technologies as a dynamic tool used for more profit, have increased the number of players trying to win larger shares of world resources though with little concern about its end results such as destruction of natural resources, increase in environmental pollution, poverty and inequality. Emergence of these problems has made the approach of sustainable development (sustainability) as an alternative paradigm replacing traditional growth paradigm. Traditional paradigm development is seeking to achieve economic growth at any cost while in the new paradigm, the quality of the environment and social justice are also considered. Higher education, because of its high impact factor in increased awareness and developing capabilities needed by members of the society, has the potential to initiate and promote sustainable development movement. Thus, with the emergence of sustainability paradigm and changes in fundamental assumptions, higher education system must also adapt to and comply with new situations in all sectors of its organizational structures- especially in the field of education. The purpose of this article is to investigate the role of universities in teaching and education for sustainability development. In this article the concept of sustainable development, the role of educational systems- particularly universities- educational approaches and key competencies needed for sustainable development are examined. Finally, certain recommendations for institutionalization of sustainable development are presented.

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