



EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

CIES 2019

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During its “Development Decade” of the 1960s, the UN advocated education as a driver of economic growth. But, over the past fifty years, questions have been asked with increasing urgency about what kind of development is promulgated through literacy, skills training, and formal schooling. **What is the longer term cost of an education that promises – and sometimes delivers – productivity, industrialization, modernity and consumption? Who pays this price? What are the larger costs? And with what ultimate consequence for the planet?** Such questions prompt the theme of the 63rd annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society: **Education for Sustainability**.

Our 2019 theme connects the CIES with a reconsideration of human progress – by scholars, governments, corporations, international agencies, and civil society at the grassroots level. This reconsideration is also reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by UN member states. The agenda finds its power by setting goals and building peaceful partnerships for the simultaneous pursuit of human well-being and ecological integrity. Our theme will remind us that, while education is both a public and private good, its impact is global. Indeed, education is integral to the four pillars the UN has seen as supporting sustainability: inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, peace and security, and environmental sustainability. We in the CIES, both individually and collectively, have much to contribute to these pillars.

How fitting that CIES will meet in San Francisco, where representatives of war-torn nation-states gathered at the Herbst Theater to negotiate and sign the UN Charter in 1945. The international institutions emerging from that historic encounter have endured through political tensions, economic crises and war. They endured partly because the United States played a positive role supporting them. The US Commission for UNESCO, for example, met in San Francisco in 1969 to discuss what could be done to improve the natural environment. That meeting led the way to a worldwide recognition of Earth Day. In 2019 CIES will return to the Herbst Theater to learn what we as scholars and educators can do to marshal new evidence and craft a sustainable future.

Today US leadership and engagement in multilateralism is in retreat, with Washington less committed than in the past to the international norms and efforts needed for sustainability. However, California remains committed to this effort. Our meeting in San Francisco thus will remind us that concerted action and scholarship in education can thwart hatred and violence, promote human rights and dignity, and help ensure our planet’s survival. CIES researchers, analysts, teachers and practitioners can – and must – play roles in these efforts. All hands are needed to analyze curricula, address demographic trends, critique existing paradigms, and advocate for policies and practices that will develop a sustainable planet for all.

Come and contribute.
