Introduction
This article deals with the so-called relationship between education and development from two different perspectives. The first one has to do with the psychic development of human beings and, therefore with personal growth, considering the historical-social influence determinant in this process. It is based mainly on a research work carried out at the Pedagogical University of Havana.

The second perspective involves the indispensable implementation of educational actions seeking to promote urgent changes in behaviour so as to preserve the planet and prevent the human race from disappearing. This is tantamount to saying education for sustainable development. The two approaches highlight the essential role played by culture, understood as all the work and knowledge gained by humanity.
Education and personal development

When we are born, we are marked by certain features. We are extremely fragile, unfinished and undefined. Unlike other species, our behaviours are not genetically programmed or prefixed in a code. What we are and what we will be is built on a daily basis; we rely more heavily on what we learn than on what we inherit.

This means that the lives of men and women as social beings are socially and historically mediated. If we see education as a cultural process that is transmitted from one generation to another, we can categorically say that it is through this process that human beings relate to and make use of culture. This process is the only exclusively human form of learning.

It is through this learning process that every individual gets to know different objects, their use, and the ways of acting, feeling and thinking. As he/she learns, new avenues open for increasingly complex learning experiences, while favouring individual development processes.

The social setting is, therefore, part and parcel of the learning and development processes. As Russian psychologist Lev S. Vygotsky put it: “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapсhysical).” All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals.

Human development goes from the external, social and intersubjective to the internal, individual and intrapsychical. Development is thus the result of the interaction between an individual and the other who play a mediating role between the former and culture. This relationship is established through education, can be either explicit or implicit, and can be developed in different formal, non-formal and incidental contexts (for example: in the family, social groups, peer groups and at school).

The education-culture-development relationships appear below:

• Education, learning and development are relatively independent and peculiar, but are closely interconnected in human life and make up a unit.

• Education is a socially complex and historically specific process that involves both the transmission and appropriation of culture. In this context, learning provides a mechanism for the subject to make use of the contents and forms of culture that are transmitted as individuals interact.

• The role of education is to promote development from specific learning experiences gained by students. However, education can promote development only when it urges people to move forward in life and acquire further knowledge to go beyond the goals already met.

• It is recognized that developmental education precedes, guides, orientates and stimulates development. It takes into account the current development level to gradually move towards higher levels.

Education for sustainable development

Despite unprecedented economic growth in the 20th century, persistent poverty and inequality still affect too many people, especially those who are most vulnerable. Conflicts continue to draw attention to the need for building a culture of peace. The global financial and economic crises highlight the risks of unsustainable economic development models and practices based on short-term gains. The food crisis and world hunger are an increasingly serious issue. Unsustainable production and consumption patterns are creating ecological impacts that compromise the options of current and future generations and the sustainability of life on Earth, as climate change is showing.

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development promotes the ideals of a more sustainable and just world community through education, awareness-raising and training activities. It stresses the essential contribution that educational and training programmes to active life, enabling local communities to devise sustainable solutions to poverty- and vulnerability-related problems.

The actions that have been implemented over this decade show that educational work goes far beyond traditional education and ministry interventions. It is, above all, a transdisciplinary, cross-sectoral action that requires the urgent adoption of new State policies in the field of education, with special emphasis on the training of teachers.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) goes far beyond the transmission of knowledge and principles related to sustainability. In general, ESD means education for social change and conducive to more sustainable societies. ESD encompasses all aspects of education: planning, policy-making, programme implementation, funding, curricular design, teaching, learning, evaluation, administration, etc. Its aim is to establish a consistent interaction among education, public awareness and training for a more sustainable future.

Evidently, ESD involves a change in traditional education modalities; it is an education for the future, for all and everywhere. It is an essential component for quality education and smooth transition to environmentally-friendly societies and economies.

There is a need to consider the elements that make ESD up, including environmental education, education for peace, education on human rights, consumer education, education for development, health education, education on HIV and AIDS, education on biodiversity, education on gender issues, inclusive education, multicultural education, holistic education, world education, citizen education, education on disaster risk reduction, education on climate change, and education for food safety.

All these topics should be seen as cross-cutting issues in the curriculum. They should be dealt with under syllabuses that define scopes (set objectives) by educational grade and level, the content to be discussed, and the methodological guidelines to be used by teachers, regardless of the subject matter they teach, so that they can include them in their lessons, as well as proposed (out-of-school) activities to be conducted at home and in the community.

Developed by the Cuban Ministry of Education (MINED) for each of the educational subsystems, the methodological guidelines on the gender, rights-based and socio-cultural approaches to sexuality education and STI, HIV and AIDS prevention provide excellent examples along these lines.

Such tools have proven to be very successful in various countries, which have introduced ESD components into specific syllabuses, subjects, and extension activities under curricular reform processes. Within the framework of the Decade, ESD becomes all the more necessary because of the following:
IT IS A SOCIAL QUESTION. THE DECISIONS WE MAKE TODAY WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON OUR FUTURE LIFESTYLE

Some scientists believe that global climate is at a turning point, that is, at a juncture where action or failure to act may change the planet in an irreversible manner. It is up to society to make decisions and take measures. Sustainable development can only be promoted in a society characterized by transparency, respect for all kinds of opinions, free discussions, and appropriate policy-making.

As a result, governance, well-being and equity are key elements for change and should involve all members of society. It should be noted that our participation in society always has an impact. Sustainable development, however, also requires changing our personal behaviour and lifestyle. It is in fact closely related to culture.

IT IS A CULTURAL QUESTION. OUR VALUES HELP SHAPE OUR ACTIONS

Culture has the capacity to promote attitudes that are needed for sustainable development. Our cultural values often involve religious beliefs and always determine the way we live and act.

Education and culture are two fundamental aspects of education for sustainable development because understanding what sustainable development is all about provides the basis for people to act as responsible citizens and consumers. Lack of tolerance negatively affects education and development opportunities. Sustainable development is based on the understanding between cultures.

Culture has a huge impact on the way education for sustainable development is approached. Values, diversity, knowledge, languages, and views of the world differ from country to country.

Education for sustainable development is different from environmental education. The former focuses on the relationship between individuals and nature, while the latter attaches utmost importance to interpersonal relations for a sustainable society. Therefore, sustainable development is in keeping with a wider context, that of political and socio-cultural issues.

IT IS AN ECONOMIC QUESTION. THERE IS NO WEALTH WITHOUT A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The world economy heavily depends on nature. In turn, our actions on the environment may have a high economic cost. If the environment is threatened, the economy is also threatened.

Three economic factors impacting on sustainable development:

- Poverty alleviation. This is a key issue in international policies.
- Corporate responsibility and accountability, considering the economic and political power of certain companies.
- Market economy. World market needs may promote activities that lead to over-exploitation, put people under precarious situations, and threaten the environment.

The solution depends on the reconciliation between market needs and environmental protection for the benefit of local communities.

IT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION. THERE IS A NEED TO PAY CLOSER ATTENTION TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

If greenhouse gas emissions continue increasing at the current pace, world temperatures will grow by 3° C in this century (as compared to 0.7° C in the last 100 years). This example clearly shows how closely interrelated environmental questions and human life are and how necessary it is to take action.

Education for individual and sustainable development

Education is intended for every human being, that is, for every individual who lives and grows in interrelation with others. It is in this interrelation that individual development takes place, in a given historical-cultural context. This development should be marked by the principle of sustainability. Education for sustainable development should be based on the needs of the main actors under the teaching-learning process, that is, the students, without ignoring other stakeholders who interact with them one way or another.

The importance that is accorded to culture as an underlying area and dimension of ESD makes it possible to develop educational projects with a full understanding of culture and ESD contents. The idea is to build new citizens whose critical, creative thinking promotes both individual and social change.

Notes

4 First paragraph of the Bonn Declaration, as adopted at the 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development.
5 For further information, please visit http://www. unesco.org/en/encyclopedia/themes/areas-of-action/ education/