

Editorial Note

Regional Approaches to Sustainable Development Goals Implementation in Education, Healthcare, Environmental Management and Urban Resilience

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This issue presents a diverse and compelling collection of research that highlights how countries in Southeast Asia and Africa are advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through localized, context-specific strategies. As part of the Global South, these regions face complex and interconnected challenges including limited resources, governance hurdles, and persistent socio-economic inequalities that make SDG implementation particularly demanding. Yet, the studies featured here demonstrate innovative approaches in education, healthcare, environmental management, and urban resilience that offer valuable insights into the region's evolving pathways toward sustainable and inclusive growth.

The role of education as both a foundation and a catalyst for broader development is explored in two studies. The first examines the alignment of Indonesia's Equivalency Programs with formal education standards, focusing on the capability of teachers to implement an emancipated curriculum (Anggrayni, 2025). Complementing this, a study on multiple job-holding in Indonesia questions the economic value of formal education and its implications on labor market behavior (Yusa et al., 2025).

Healthcare and well-being, central to SDGs 3, are addressed through an insightful analysis of patient satisfaction and healthcare responsiveness, underscoring the human dimensions of service delivery (Hidayat et al., 2025). Similarly, a study from the Philippines assesses water quality at school consumption points, raising critical concerns for both student health and institutional infrastructure (Yazawa et al., 2025).

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Urban development and spatial justice emerge as powerful themes in three of the papers. From Nairobi's informal settlements (Odongo et al., 2025) to Jakarta's green space-crime nexus (Fitriyyah and Permana, 2025) and Kampung Bugisan's efforts in land consolidation to combat tidal flooding (Widura et al., 2025), these contributions demonstrate how cities can be both sites of vulnerability and innovation. A modeling study from Nairobi, in particular, illustrates the use of scenario planning to meet public space standards, while highlighting the intersection of environmental justice and urban planning.

Agriculture and food security are spotlighted in the context of farmer regeneration in Sumatra, Indonesia, presenting demographic and policy insights that link rural development to national food sustainability (Nurarifin and Kurniawan, 2025).

Two final contributions round out the issue with a wider lens through a critical review of a book on the physics of climate change invites reflection on scientific literacy and climate communication (Arafat, 2025), while a sobering analysis of enforced disappearances in Southeast Asia reminds us of the unfinished business of reform and the importance of civil liberties in the SDG agenda (Wiedoko, 2025).

Together, these papers reflect the complexity and interdependence of sustainable development issues. They show that while the SDGs are global in ambition, their success is deeply rooted in regional, cultural, and contextual realities. Based on the insights drawn from the diverse approaches, it is evident that successful regional implementation of the SDGs, particularly in the Global South requires an integrated, context-sensitive approach that bridges policy, grassroots engagement, and data-driven planning. Future strategies should prioritize cross-sector collaboration by linking education reform with labor market needs, integrating health and environmental monitoring into school systems, and embedding participatory urban planning to address informal settlements and public space access. Capacity-building for local governments, community-based data collection, and inclusive policymaking that reflects both rural and urban realities will be essential. Moreover, strengthening regional platforms for knowledge exchange can accelerate innovation and shared learning across nations, enhancing the coherence and resilience of SDG efforts in the region.