

Research Report

Special Conference II: Development and Sustainability

Establishing "Green Jobs" in developed and developing countries

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Forum	Special Conference 2: Development and Sustainability
Issue:	Establishing “Green Jobs” in developed and developing countries.
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Introduction

Regarding the issues of environmental protection and sustainable development, the idea of implementing “Green Jobs” is a legitimate solution. Referring to the United Nations Environment Program, Green Jobs are defined as “work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development (R&D), administrative, and service activities that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality”. They jobs that for instance “help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high efficiency strategies; de-carbonize the economy; and minimize or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution”. The Bureau of Labor Statistics adds to this definition that “Green Jobs” must “produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or use fewer natural resources.” Due to the fact they are considered sustainable, they must respect the “triple bottom line” which refers to the improvement of: the ecosystem’s health; the quality of life; the creation of a thriving economy, where economic development and social inclusion are highly promoted.

Currently, “Green Jobs” are being created, not only in developed countries, such as the USA, but even in developing countries, such as Brazil, China and Bangladesh. Both MEDCs and LEDCs must respond to the challenge of sustainability by creating “Green Jobs” as it improves the environment and also creates more jobs. This will then result in the betterment of the quality of life. “Green Jobs” can be viewed as an answer to the problem of climate change, and as the first step to a complete modification of society.

Global climate change is an issue that has been on going for years now, yet, it is still vital for our society to ‘go green’. To reach the objective of transforming an economy into a green industry, an environmental transition is required.

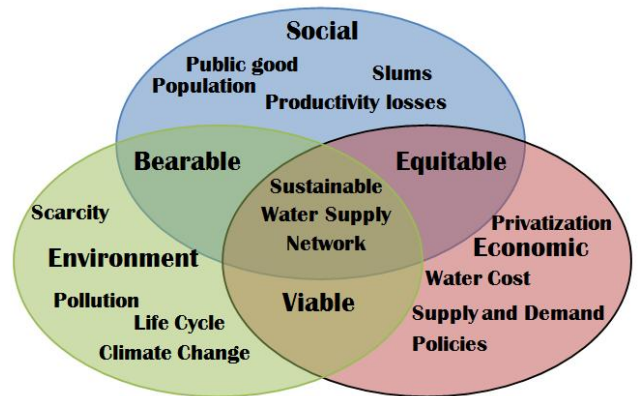
In a nutshell these sustainable jobs, which reduce our destructive impact on the planet, will, undeniably, improve the environment.

Definition of Key Terms

Sustainable development

The most well-known definition of sustainable development was given in the Brundtland report in 1987: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. It must connect time and space, as the decisions made and the actions taken today may have consequences for other regions of the world, but also for upcoming generations.

It then becomes a duty to preserve the environment, and implementing “Green Jobs” is a method of contributing to this.



The “triple bottom line” to achieve sustainable development.

“Water Supply Network.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 23 Aug. 2014. Web. 04 Sept. 2014. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_supply_network>.

Green economy

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) defines a “green economy as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.” A green economy must combine investments, efficiency in the production, and preservation of the environment. Although the transition to ‘Green Jobs’ is orchestrated by the International Labor Organization (ILO), it is the global community that is responsible for the action and perpetuation.

“Just Transition”

In this changing society, ILO’s key role are its attempts to promote what it calls the “Just Transition”, where shifting to a low carbon and sustainable society are the main goals. In this transition, ILO argues that social solidarity is highly necessary so that employers and unions can begin working together in greening the workplace, for instance.

General Overview

As previously stated, “Green Jobs” are a fantastic opportunity for the future, and even though not every country uses them, some statistics show that it is only a matter of time until they do. In effect, according to an article published by the LA Times, “Green Jobs” grew at a rate four times faster from 2010 to 2011 than all other industries combined. This is the proof they are gaining importance within all sectors.

“Green Jobs” intake

What do they bring to the environment?

Implementing “Green jobs” involves creating an alternative job type suspected to preserve the environment, and resulting in the reduction of the environmental impact of enterprises. Thus, these “Green Jobs” are a way to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems, to shift to a low-carbon economy, or even to drastically decrease the number of greenhouse gas emissions. The more “Green Jobs” are created, the easier the “Just Transition” will be. They play a considerable role in the enhancement of resources efficiency and in the meantime, permit the construction of a low-carbon sustainable society.

Job opportunities

If ILO really emphasizes such jobs, it’s because the number of opportunities they create are uncountable and, when global unemployment is reaching a peak, it can only be beneficial. In effect, between 2007 and 2012, the number of ‘Green Jobs’ has increased by nearly 27 million. Social solidarity is needed to make the communication between employers and employees easier. Many businesses are being started up based on green values, rather than others that are radically changing their methods of work. Efforts are being made in order to ease the transition to a greener economy that has the potential to create millions of jobs. In a report published in 2009, the UNEP showed that “Green Jobs” were the key to a bright future where job offers in this sector will be tremendous. Already today, the number of green jobs available is on the rise, and it will be the economic driver for years to come, as the transition to a low-carbon society requires more investments (new technologies, equipments, and infrastructure) which will create new areas of employment, which will transform existing jobs but will also improve the quality of life.

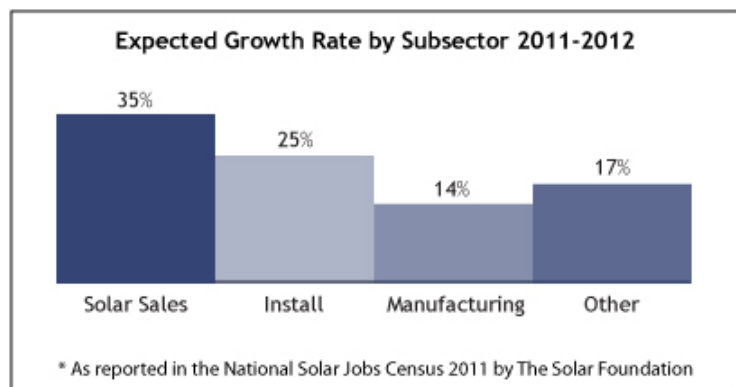


What about women and children?

Concerning women, their rate of unemployment was 5.8 percent in comparison with men at 5.3 percent, while young workers are nearly three times as likely as adults to be unemployed. “Green Jobs” will have a direct impact on women living in rural areas in the poorest regions of the world, such as in developing countries. In these regions, women’s economic activities are dependent on the local natural resources, and therefore any modification of the environment can have multiple consequences on their quality of life. They are the most vulnerable to the effects of environmental degradation and climate change and such jobs would be an opportunity to better their living conditions. Not only will these jobs change the environment in a positive way but they will also create employment opportunities for women and their children in order for them to leave the cycle of poverty. Even though, women and children have often been ignored, not letting them exploit these opportunities would be a mistake. As a matter of human rights and economics, their participation mustn’t be overlooked.

Problems with “Green Jobs”

Undoubtedly, “Green Jobs” could resolve some unemployment issues, but however, it’s important to be aware of the fact that there are also cons to this solution. While the green sector is increasing in size, other economic sectors are starting to become the victim. This is clearly visible when we have a look at this bar chart:



Will a transition to a green economy provoke the loss of the secondary sector of the economy? Such a question cannot be answered immediately, but according to current data and this graph, this sector is clearly declining.

Added to this, despite the fact “Green Jobs” create jobs; special training is required to occupy some positions, which imply costs will not always be affordable for people with lower incomes.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United Nations Environment Program

Founded in 1972, UNEP is the branch of the UN that is dedicated to the environment. Its mission is to “promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system and to serve as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.” In brief, they work on environment for development, including supporting the promotion of ‘Green Jobs’.

China

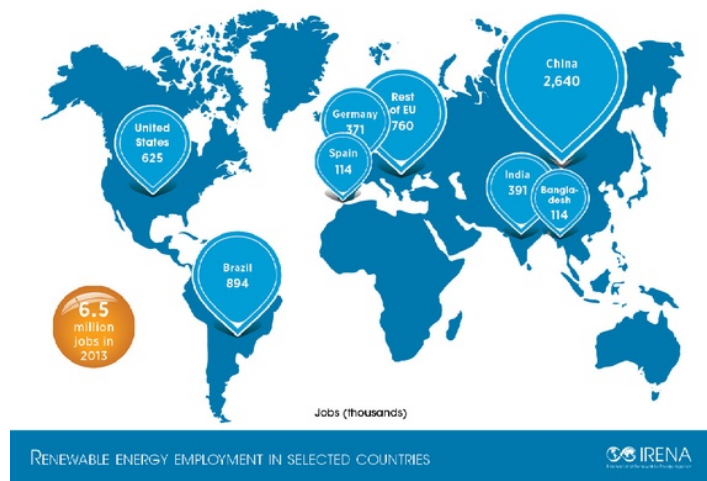
China is dominating the global race within green sectors; it is accountable 70% of the total number of solar energy-related jobs, and employs 2.6 million people in renewable energy overall.

International Labor Organization

ILO’s role is significant as it promotes job and protects people. Added to this the organization is being a major actor of the implementation of green jobs, due to the fact it creates decent employments opportunities. Also, note the fact that ILO is very active, and often writes reports to show the progress made.

Bangladesh

Although only 47% of the Bangladesh’s population had access to electricity (2009), they have been able to create a green sector equal in size to that of Spain’s. Thanks to solar energy, Bangladesh has been able to create about 114 000 jobs, and nearly doubled the number of solar-related jobs between 2011 and 2013.



Green Jobs in the Major Countries

International Renewable Energy Agency. *Renewable Energy and Jobs: Annual Review 2014* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.



Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December 11 th 1987	The “Brundtland Report” was welcomed by the General Assembly (Resolution 42/187). The report deals with sustainable development and the different strategies to achieve it.
June 3 rd – June 14 th 1992	Rio Summit. A conference under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which focused on an “Earth charter” and on the “Agenda 21”. The aim was to organize a global action plan for sustainable development.
1995	The Working for Water Program, in a small poor village in South Africa, named Keiskammahoek. Aiming to secure the water, the program extended to the whole region, and created 4.5 million job opportunities. To sum up: jobs were created, and water availability was increased. This shows how important local governments’ actions are.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- Promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection, December 12th 2010 (**A/RES/65/173**)
- The 102nd Session of the International Labor Conference: a resolution was passed concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs. This was adopted on June 19th 2013 in Geneva.
- “Green Jobs: Towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon world: A 2009 UNEP report revealing some promising statistics and expecting 6.3 million solar photovoltaic jobs worldwide in 2030.

(For further information, see Appendix)

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The issue concerning establishing sustainable development has been a recurrent one since the awareness of the necessity of protecting the environment. The two relevant resolutions of the preceding section show that the matter has already been taken into account. "Green Jobs", as it is stated in the ILO's resolution, are said to be able to "contribute significantly to poverty eradication and social inclusion" and in the UN resolution it has been shown that "Green Jobs" are really interesting with regard to ecotourism. However, it has been noted that the creation of "Green Jobs" requires specific training.

Possible Solutions

"Green Jobs" are by far most needed in developing countries as it may result in severe modifications. However, everything has a cost, and implementing these jobs will also require organizing training to prepare future workers. "Green Jobs" must concern every single sector of the economy. The implementation of 'Green Jobs' in the transportation industry alone, as it was done in Bogota, Colombia with the "TransMilenio", created a total of 95 000 jobs. The main way in which "Green Jobs" can be made increase exponentially is to encourage local governments to promote them. Local governments must create opportunities, give chances to women and youth and diminish the costs of training workers, as well as promoting Waste Management and Recycling or Green construction. Added to this, the international community should continue supporting ILO in its actions.

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Appendix or Appendices

- I. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/173
- II. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_223785.pdf
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