

Higher Education for Sustainable Development and Proposed Performance-based Funding Model for Universities in Ontario: Tensions and Coherence Between Provincial and Federal Policies

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Abstract : In 2015, all 193 UN Member countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is an ambitious 15- year plan to address some of the most pressing issues the world faces. Goal 4 is about Quality Education which highlights the importance of inclusive and quality education for sustainable development. Sustainable Development Goal 10 focuses on reducing inequalities within and among countries. In June 2019, Federal Government in Canada released “Towards Canada’s 2030 Agenda National Strategy”, which was an important step to move the 2030 Agenda forward. In April 2019, the Ontario government announced the performance-based funding model for publically assisted colleges and universities in Ontario, which is now part of the universities’ budget 2024-2025. The literature review has shown that the funding model has been implemented by different governments to achieve objectives. However, this model has also resulted in conflicting consequences like reducing university autonomy, education quality/ academic standards, and increased equity concerns. The primary focus of this paper will be to analyze the tensions and coherence between the proposed funding model for education for sustainable development goals and targets set by Canada’s 2030 Agenda National Strategy. Considering that the literature review has provided evidence that the performance-based funding model has resulted in reducing quality of education and increased equity issues in other countries, it will be interesting to see how this proposed funding will align with the SDGs of “Quality Education” and “Reduced Inequalities”. This paper will be well-suited for Volume 4, with the theme of re-visioning institutional impact and sustainability. This paper will underscore the importance of policy coherence between federal and provincial policies for higher education institutions in Ontario for better institutional impact and helping universities in the attainment of goals set in 2030 Agenda towards education for sustainable development.

Keywords : performance-based funding model, education for sustainable development, policy coherence, sustainable development gaols

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