



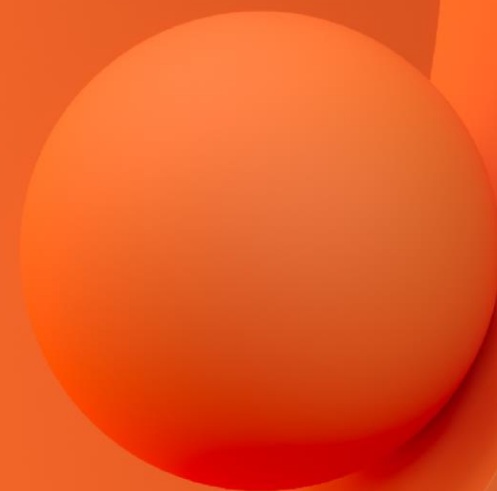
МІНІСТЕРСТВО
ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ
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CED—2025

International scientific conference
on economic development and
legacy of Simon Kuznets

October 16, 2025

Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of
Economics.

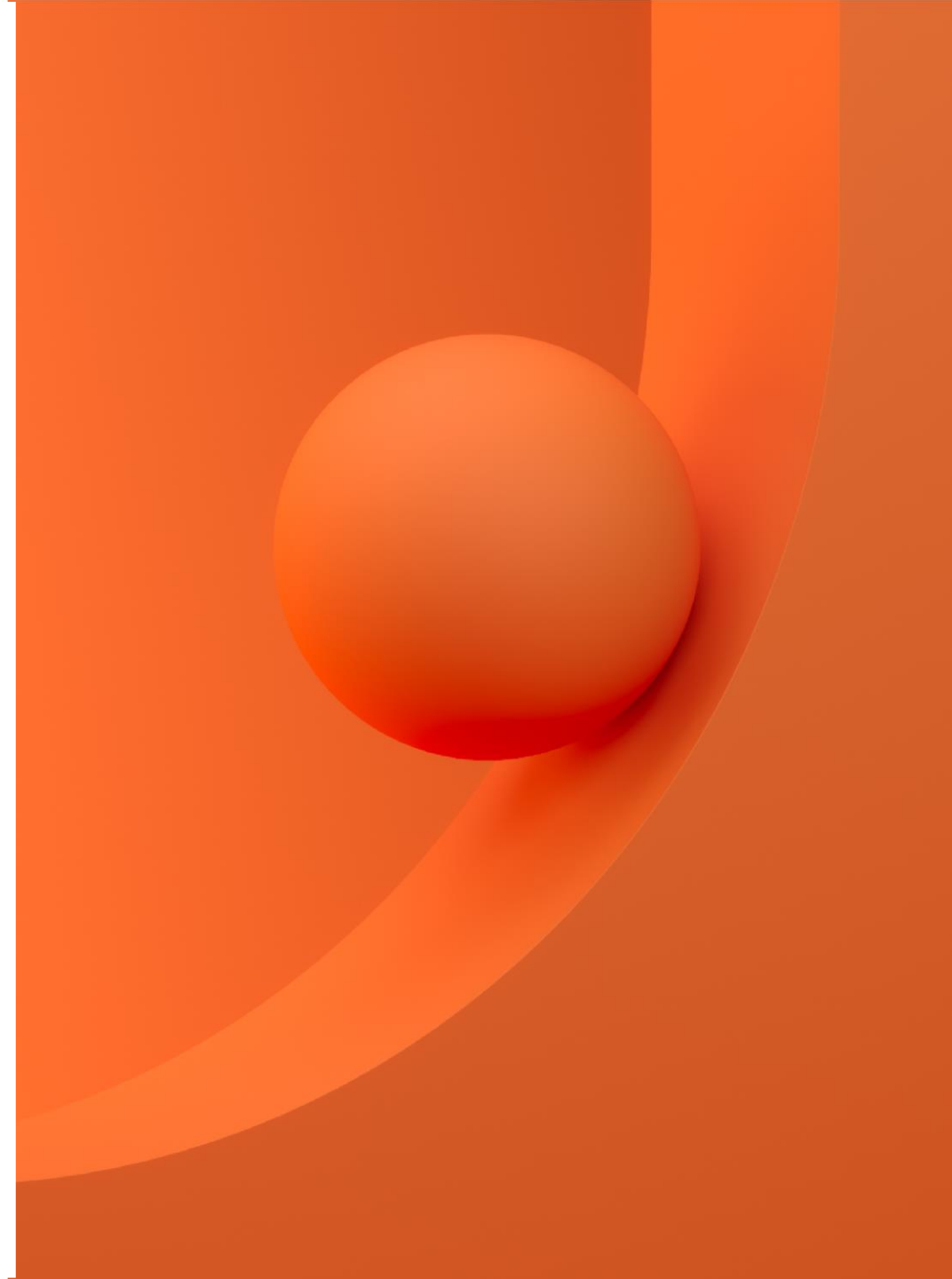




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Inclusion, Diversity and Sustainable Development: A Conceptual Perspective

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Problem

Inclusion is often perceived only as a moral obligation, not as a strategic or economic value.

The potential of inclusion to drive social justice, innovation, and sustainability remains underused.

Research Aim

To examine how inclusion can be framed both as a principle of social justice and as a source of economic and managerial value.

To highlight the contribution of inclusion to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities).



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/df/Sustainable_Development_Goals.png

Sub-targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)

TARGET 4-1  FREE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION	TARGET 4-2  EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION	TARGET 4-3  EQUAL ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION	TARGET 4-4  INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH RELEVANT SKILLS FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS	TARGET 4-5  ELIMINATE ALL DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION
TARGET 4-6  UNIVERSAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY	TARGET 4-7  EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP	TARGET 4-A  BUILD AND UPGRADE INCLUSIVE AND SAFE SCHOOLS	TARGET 4-B  EXPAND HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	TARGET 4-C  INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Source: the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Sub-targets of Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10)



Source: the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Methodology

A conceptual case study based on content analysis

Materials: academic research, policy documents, international frameworks

The analysis highlighted two perspectives:

- **Academic** – how inclusion and social justice are theorised and applied in research
 - **Policy** – how legal and strategic frameworks (e.g., 2030 Agenda, CRPD, EU strategies) define and promote inclusion
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Frameworks Defining Inclusion

Domain / Level	Examples
International	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); <i>The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i> (SDGs); UNESCO Education 2030 Framework for Action
Regional (EU)	EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021–2030; European Pillar of Social Rights
National	National laws on education and equal opportunities; policy guidelines on inclusion and diversity
Institutional	University inclusion strategies; equality and diversity action plans; internal regulations

Academic Perspective – Key Themes from Literature

Theme	Key Findings	Illustrative Authors
Social justice in sustainability	The social dimension often undervalued; stronger focus needed on equity, safety, cohesion	Ballet, Bazin, Thomas & Mahieu (2025)
Just Transition and evaluation	Social justice must be central in assessing sustainability and climate projects	Di Ciommo et al. (2023)
Higher education and inclusion	Ecofeminist and service-learning approaches link education with social justice and sustainability	Cuenca-Soto et al. (2023); Ribeiro-Silva et al. (2023)
SDGs and neoliberalism critique	Current SDG approaches risk being too market-driven; need transformative models for social justice	McCloskey (2019)
Globalisation, labour, governance	Digitalisation and governance strongly affect inequality; policies must address socio-economic divides	Nae, Florescu & Bălăşoiu (2024)

Policy and Legal Frameworks on Inclusion

Theme	Key Findings	Illustrative Documents
Global sustainability agenda	Defines 17 SDGs as a universal call to action; inclusion linked to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)	United Nations (2015). <i>Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</i>
Human rights and disability	Establishes inclusion as a fundamental human right; ensures equal participation and accessibility	United Nations (2006). <i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)</i>
Education for all	Calls for inclusive and equitable quality education; emphasises lifelong learning	UNESCO (2015). <i>Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action</i>
European strategies	Promotes equality, accessibility, and participation at EU level; mainstreams disability rights	European Commission (2021). <i>Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030</i>
Social protection and justice	Sets principles of equal opportunities, fair working conditions, and social protection	European Commission (2017). <i>European Pillar of Social Rights</i>

Results

Inclusion policies increasingly link **social justice with sustainability goals** (SDG 4, SDG 10).

Content analysis shows a shift: from symbolic commitments → to **strategic integration** of diversity.

Examples from international initiatives highlight:

- Broader participation of underrepresented groups
- Recognition of disability and diversity as sources of innovation
- Positive impact on organizational reputation and competitiveness

Overall, inclusion generates **both social and economic benefits**, reinforcing its role as a dual-value principle.

Key Findings

Social justice dimension often undervalued in sustainability frameworks (Ballet et al., 2025).

Just Transition approach highlights that inclusion must be central in project and policy evaluation (Di Ciommo et al., 2023).

Higher education can link sustainability with equity through service-learning and ecofeminist approaches (Cuenca-Soto et al., 2023; Ribeiro-Silva et al., 2023).

International frameworks define inclusion as a **human right** and connect it with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Implications

For Higher Education & Research

- Inclusion strengthens academic excellence and international collaboration
- Supports alignment with global sustainability agendas (SDGs)

For Management & Policy

- Inclusion should be treated as a strategic investment, not only a social duty
- Diversity-oriented practices create both social and economic value

For Society

- Builds fairer, more innovative, and resilient communities
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