



The Important Role of Environmental Justice in Supporting Green Schools

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ABSTRACT: The world's awareness of the importance of protecting the earth's environment is proof that nature is seen as an inseparable part of humankind. For this reason, the application of green schools is increasingly being carried out as evidence of the achievement of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This research is related to the success of Al-Fajar Bekasi Islamic High School in implementing environmental justice in supporting green schools. This research method uses a qualitative phenomenological approach. The research findings show that the environmental justice approach plays a full role in supporting the creation of green schools for the long term. Student behavior that is in accordance with environmental justice, namely equality between humans will support that nature is an important component. Thus, the urgency of a pro-environmental attitude combined with adaptation to environmental justice for sustainable development must be instilled from an early age in public and private schools, so that later the younger generation will become the group that determines the success of environmental development in Indonesia with optimal and credible knowledge, attitudes and skills.

Keywords: Environmental Justice, Green Schools, ESD



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INTRODUCTION

The destruction of the quality and quantity of the environment until this era has resulted in the urgency of changing attitudes and paradigms for all parties in managing the environment. The means that can be used to overcome this is the strategy of developing environmental education, especially those that have been carried out from an early age in all schools in the world in an effort to promote the emergence of green schools. This change of view in protecting the environment is proof that humans are a supporting part of the universe that determines the sustainability of the earth. With this environmental awareness, there are more and more applications of green schools in various parts of the world with an increase in the achievement of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Environmental problems such as natural disasters and environmental pollution are rife in Indonesia, especially in the city of Bekasi which is also very dominant due to extreme weather that has occurred, especially in 2019-2021 which can be seen in table 1.

Table 1 Natural Disaster in Bekasi City (Danta,2019)

DISTRICTS	TOTAL BUILDING FIRE	TOTAL WIND STORM	TOTAL FLOOD	TOTAL LANDSLIDES
Bekasi Timur	3	-	14	2
Bekasi Barat	-	-	14	3
Bekasi Utara	1	1	17	1
Bekasi Selatan	4	-	10	1
Rawalumbu	-	-	18	1
Medansatria	-	-	12	-
Bantargebang	2	1	10	-
Pondokgede	1	-	21	1
Jatiasih	-	1	19	-
Jatisampurna	-	-	7	-
Mustikajaya	1	-	14	-
Pondokmelati	-	1	16	-
TOTAL	12	4	172	9

The table above shows the districts that are prone to fires, namely South Bekasi with a total of 4 times, and the districts with the fewest fires, namely North Bekasi, Pondok Gede, and Mustikajaya. However, flood disasters experience an average potential that is quite frequent and the greatest in the Pondok Gede sub-district. This natural disaster is proof that environmental awareness is important for humans to protect the environment. One effort that can be done is to support environmental education from an early age. The role of the school as a place for environment-based learning determines changes in individual behavior to become environmentally friendly. The concept that is being developed by the Government of Indonesia to date is the construction of green schools in Indonesia.

However, it cannot be denied that the implementation of this green school still encounters obstacles from management factors, financial allocations, policies, performance achievement results, and others. For example, financial implementation is a crucial issue in implementing green schools. The high costs used, misinterpretation in policy settings and the long duration of time used sometimes actually results in failure in implementation. Even though this school project has been assisted by public funds through a multilateral scheme in which not only the local and central government but also the private sector and other international institutions are involved.

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Thus, the implementation of environmental justice is a solution in environmental reconciliation for the process of managing financial allocations evenly. Incorporating the concept of distributive justice dimensions will be the driving force for budget equity.

An environmental justice-based educational approach can also be integrated into sociocultural issues such as class inequality, gender, and racial inequality, other forms of social degradation, as well as ecological destruction. Schools are places where different races and genders and cultures mix together into one group. Supposedly, if there is a difference, it should be morally understandable, because equality is the human right of each individual (Reis, G., & Scott, 2018).

The achievement of environmental education has become an increasingly major concern over time because many expectations are desired for the success of this concept. However, it is important to remember that this cannot stand alone, for this reason, interdisciplinary assistance is needed in the education sector, one of which is the application of environmental justice and global citizenship so that activeness is formed in every human activity (Amos & Carvalho, 2020).

One example of a school that has successfully implemented a green school with a combination of implementing environmental justice is the Al Fajar Bekasi Islamic school. This school provides directions for students to continue to minimize their environmental impact because instilling environmental awareness from an early age is an obligation that must be carried out by the school as a noble and responsible education facilitator.



Figure 1 Al Fajar Islamic School

Environmental education must be kept in mind not only as a sub-discipline of education but as a main part of education. As a result, the best environmental education must be able to become an important philosophy that must be developed in a sustainable manner with creative innovation together (Irwin, 2015).

Making students as friends in socializing green schools will be a superior point in environmental learning. If from an early age, students are always forged in pro-environmental behavior, then a person who is environmentally conscious will be created with real actions of dynamic change which ends by encouraging further action to a broad scope, namely the surrounding community to make local changes which ultimately maximize the potential of a green school (Reimers, 2018).

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Campaigning for ESD can also be complemented with historical, social, cultural, economic and political dimensions in order to support the alignment of the concept of environmental education. For this reason, this must be understood as a process of contemplating cultural values so that educational actions occur in a social context ([Nogueira, 2018](#)).

For this reason, best practices in education and effective pedagogy must be implemented with the application of environmental justice throughout the competency-based curriculum design to support green schools. Eventually, the apathy toward climate decreases, and students become wiser in understanding the environmental and social issues around them.

There are two main components in the implementation of green schools combined with environmental justice, including; first, emphasizing human values for all human beings without any differences in ideology, gender, or race. Act politely and respectfully (during and afterward) with sincerity. Second, do not blame others for mistakes taken in the social, political, and economic context ([Clover et al, 2013](#)).

The active role of environmental justice will further optimize green schools, coupled with the collaboration of each party that unites to become supporters of the green school group. Environmental justice is basically a theory that states what factors have an influence on the opinions of various groups so as to create shared norms and healthy institutions. Environmental justice is also related to sustainable communities where the balance in obtaining justice for local institutions is the key to environmental effectiveness ([He et al, 2021](#)).

Maximizing collaboration with all institutions is a condition for supporting educational differences so that social discrepancies that occur can be eliminated. The first dimension of distribution, or distributive justice, is about the distribution of benefits and burdens between people. For example, access to clean water or air pollution. This justice states the importance of the expertise of actors in distributing environmental benefits and costs in a balanced way. Second, the dimension of participation, or procedural justice, is the process of decision-making mechanisms. This refers to fairness in the political process of resource allocation and dispute resolution, in which participation in decision-making is a key element, which includes the norms of representation and inclusion. The third dimension, environmental justice is recognition, which is considered an inherent prerequisite for distributive justice and the most ideal type of participation. Recognition requires remembering the identities and histories of different people and avoiding the cultural domination of some groups over others with respect and cultural differences. As a result, this implies recognizing the diversity of group experiences and knowledge and rejecting any pressure on minority groups to assimilate into dominant norms. The three dimensions of justice issues are interrelated, overlapping and connected to one another.

Active participation in public decision-making should lead to a fair distribution of results. Recognition of social differences can facilitate the inclusion of certain people in decision-making. Redistributive action can empower previously marginalized people to actively participate in public decision-making ([Fields et al., 2020](#)). The adoption system that is carried out for the

development of environmental justice will strengthen recognition for minority communities so that they become involved in all stages of decision making ([Rigolon et al, 2021](#)).

The proposed interdisciplinary framework to support the implementation of environmental justice will further support the sustainability agenda. Considerations such as economic, social, and racial aspects when making choices based on the concept of justice will determine the success of a framework. Finally, the decisions and interventions taken will not exacerbate environmental inequalities around natural benefits and ecosystem services among economically, socially, and racially disadvantaged groups ([Argelich et al., 2021](#)).

Thus, the important role of environmental justice can support the creation of green schools that are right on target. Schools must be role models in all kinds of behavior changes that lead to environmental justice. This will prove that green schools can be implemented if they are supported by the real implementation of environmental justice. This evidence is consistent with the novelty findings in this study which combine the concept of a green school with environmental justice which is not found in other researchers because they usually only focus on one concept. So, on this basis, the writer is interested in knowing that the importance of implementing environmental justice will support the creation of green schools efficiently and effectively for the sustainability of these schools.

METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. This method is used because the writer wants to understand how the depth and richness of the meaning of human experience can be measured, explored, and brought into language. As in the phenomenological approach, this requires assumptions that suspend and reveal basic meanings ([Adams & Van Manen, 2017](#)). The phenomenon of the success of the Al Fajar Bekasi Islamic High School which won the Adiwiyata award in 2019 is the target object of research with informants namely the school principal, teachers, and parents of students. This award itself was obtained because the school was able to improve the quality of management of advice and infrastructure in developing education with an environmental justice approach that played a full role in supporting the creation of green schools for the long term, so as to achieve sustainability development.

Then, the length of research starts from 2019-2020 with in-depth interviews with Focus Group Discussions regarding the school's success in achieving this award. The research phase begins with the first stage of collecting primary and secondary data, the second stage of analyzing the results of the data found based on relevant theories taking into account the gaps between facts and existing expectations, and finally the third stage of providing conclusions and recommendations based on field findings compiled with relevant theories.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of researchers in the field obtained from three informants; namely the success of the green school felt by the students of Alfajar Bekasi Islamic Senior High School due to the existence of an environment-based school learning strategy with clear evidence. that this school has received the 2019 Bekasi City level Adiwiyata school award led by Mr. H.M. Suparno, S.Pd, MM as the principal at that time. The school itself has a vision: To create superior, Islamic, and disciplined scholars with an environmental perspective, while its mission is to optimize the potential of students to become superior scholars with a global outlook, based on Islam, science, and technology and as a discipline in the life of the nation and state with an environmental perspective. This vision and mission prepare the next generation as superior Islamic scholars who are ready to compete in the globalization era but do not rule out the role of the environment as a learning medium. throughout Indonesia. Thus the school does not only focus on general learning but also on environmental learning which is based on environmental justice as evidenced by the educational strategy that has been implemented with evidence of the synergy of cooperation from all related parties both internal and external.



Figure 2 Adiwiyata Award for Al Fajar School

The issue of climate change and energy is a major ongoing challenge faced by everyone. To address this problem, administrators and policy makers around the world promulgated agreements, laws, standards, and regulations. In implementing this policy, public awareness of energy-related issues has increased rapidly, thus providing a behavior change movement to reduce the various environmental impacts that occur.



Figure 3 Plant a Tree

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The negative impact of changes in nature has actually started a long time ago, namely during the industrial revolution which disproportionately had bad implications so changes in perceptions and actions were needed to support and protect the natural environment as a positive contribution to social life. It is important to have environmental awareness and inner potential towards sustainability so that it can be shared with other members ([Imran et al., 2021](#)).

Traditional knowledge-based environmental education has proven to be consistently weak in its impact process because of its small and indirect role in disseminating pro-environmental behavior. For this reason, educational innovation is needed in integrating transformative learning theory which is considered as the main supporting pillar in changing the social order through individual transformation ([Chen & Martin, 2015](#)).

Schools, as a special community, must not only meet all the demands of ordinary society but also have the possibility to spread awareness of all components. Students must have good environmental conditions to go to school, as a result, school institutions have a responsibility in facilitating land with clean and comfortable air quality. The application of a green school will be the solution here in forming a beautiful and sustainable school environment and ensuring that all students can accept it ([Zhao et al., 2015](#)).

Green school planning needs to be carried out carefully and carefully by paying attention to all aspects starting from the building concept, land, and environmental conditions, management systems, and school integrity, to change the behavior of students and other school members so that they are motivated in a sustainable manner. Green schools are adaptive and dynamic so that they can be updated and conditioned according to existing performance. This is in line with the finding that the natural environment is unpredictable, so a separate initiative is needed to socialize this school. The initial concept of the school was a place for studying knowledge, but with the compilation of green schools, school functions have changed to support and minimize the efficiency of energy use with existing resources.

In an effort to optimize green schools, it needs to be combined with environmental justice. The concept of justice is proven to be able to align the interests of all aspects in a sustainable manner. The initial effort is to maintain a balance in racial and economic equality in fulfilling information and public access so that it will reduce the social gap between the poor and minorities. Environmental justice will become a sub-system of the new order in maintaining better and fairer socio-economic conditions for society ([Zhang et al., 2021](#)).

The condition in which the community feels that they are not valued by the local government is one of the causes of the failure of the environmental justice they adhere to. Community involvement must be actively developed so that there is two-way communication which in distribution protects the interests of all by integrating the responsibilities of local authorities ([Strzelecka et al., 2021](#)).

For this reason, maximum progress in environmental education can be made if policymakers implement efforts to align local information with international demands and add special

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attention to curriculum ideology, competition policies, and teachers' voice in policy-making while fully supporting a commitment to ESD ([Glackin & Greer, 2021](#)).

Putting environmental justice into ecology also requires initial awareness to form a spatial space that can increase explicit understanding of race, gender, class, and cultural disparities which will become obstacles if not managed properly. Environmental justice will be a bridge in the application of rules and laws and environmental policies with the concept of equal recognition for all people without discrimination. As a result, the potential for environmental injustice will be treated by developing this potential ([Miriti et al., 2021](#)).

Environmental justice has priority in providing problem-solving ideas in decision-making in environmental management with the principle of equality. The concept of sharing social benefits for all will also be the best result in resolving injustice in socio-cultural interactions in institutions ([Blue et al, 2021](#)).

There are three key actions in campaigning for environmental justice, First, Theoretical and methodological development strategies as well as interdisciplinary training for students and experts. Second, socializing and persuading knowledge in a comprehensive, inclusive, and participatory manner. Third, produce institutional frameworks and supporting governance models obtained from the results of joint interdisciplinary consultations ([Riedel et al., 2021](#)).



Figure 4 Al Fajar School Social Service Activities

Providing equal treatment and increasing the active involvement of the community regardless of skin color, ideology and income are the main concepts in EJ. However, keep in mind that getting equal attention is not giving the same burden out of proportion to each individual, you must pay attention to the conditions and targets of the recipients so that citizens will really feel fair and satisfied because they are cared for ([Khanal et al., 2021](#)).

Initiatives in environmental management with a moral approach, especially in the development of conservation together, will provide a fair distribution for everyone. The application of distributional justice plays a role in assessing governance in order to weaken the conflicts that occur so as to further enhance the environmental justice approach and environmental practices ([Gurney et al., 2021](#)).

There are two important concepts in EJ namely participation and recognition. Minimizing

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conflicts and paradigm differences is a shared priority supported by the active involvement and empowerment of local communities with the result of providing fair benefits while maintaining environmental conditions. As a result, these two concepts will support environmental governance by supporting environmental policy directions in a responsible manner ([Mkutu et al., 2019](#)).

The stages in the environmental learning system must also be in line with optimizing social goodness for others such as the EJ concept. The participation of students and teachers in the classroom will support changes in their attitudes outside the classroom. A strong environmental commitment will be a positive contribution to following up the success of a green school.

This evidence further strengthens the principle of the Al Fajar school which collaborates in supporting green schools by making students equal partners so that they feel happy and comfortable in carrying out activities to protect the environment without any coercion in accordance with the EJ principles which provide equality and recognition.



Figure 5 Activities for Tidying Up Garbage with Teachers and Students at Al Fajar School

Improving the quality of human life followed by a sustainable concept can be intertwined with a balance between the environment, economy, and society in order to lead to harmony with nature. Inspiration for a better life is in line with EJ so that implementing social good that occurs can be felt by all people by providing fulfillment without sacrificing present and future generations ([Makuch & Aczel, 2019](#)).

For example, one of the steps taken by the local government is to create a program that involves the community and the environment in sustainable urban safe zones or the New York City Environmental Slow Zone Program (NSZ). This project will be a smart move in supporting EJ by reducing environmental risks and land conflicts as well as providing recognition and participation for the poor to play an active role in it ([Hagen, 2018](#)).

The strategy to implement and develop the central role of community-based organizing will provide a breakthrough change in policy governance that will promote EJ efficiently. The reconceptualization of the agency-environment relationship is key. Thus, infrastructure resilience is supported by targeted improvements adjusted to central planning considerations that will support good environmental justice outcomes for all parties within it ([Solis, 2020](#)).

Collaboration systems that are established with small communities, medium communities, and then large communities will form various changes from small to large scopes that are different from environmental education assistance because the process of representing this sub-group will create change with a better partnership approach without growing social jealousy ([Gupta et al., 2017](#)).

It should also be understood that opportunities for private foundations to support environmental activities are often underestimated and often not maximized so there is often a shift in value for the private sector which is often considered insignificant. Even though the support from the private sector should not be taken lightly because they can also be interesting ideas for local sustainability, they are not even proclaimed. As a result, government agencies must be able to act quickly on this phenomenon, not just being spectators in a cage, but strictly supervising law enforcement officers. Not all of these private parties do damage to the environment because they also have various environmental programs that are not often seen by the government itself ([Krikser & Matzdorf, 2015](#)).

Lifestyle is one of the causes of environmental damage that occurs on Earth, especially the hedonic lifestyle often seen in urban areas with high modernity and increasing population density. In contrast to the lifestyle in rural areas that still use simple equipment and are not wasteful in the use of resources. EJ will be decisive in the lifestyle considerations taken because EJ will teach to reduce the resources used ([Shortt et al., 2014](#)).

As a result, implementing EJ implementation steps into every line of institution and scope of society will be the best solution to support sustainable development in collaboration. The key to active togetherness and recognition will be a solution to equity in the ongoing socio-political conflict ([Pulido & Juan, 2018](#)).

Another cause of the application of EJ not being optimal is also the lack of supervision and regulation of environmental laws. Sometimes the law is ready to be implemented, but it is often avoided due to procedures and systems that are not optimal. Coupled with the rapidly moving environmental conditions so that environmental damage is allowed to drag on for years without being enforced by the law, this condition makes it increasingly difficult to restore environmental conditions to normal. As a result, the Government is the key to supporting this regulation, and must revitalize policies that are appropriate for the region and strong and binding penalties indiscriminately ([Wright et al., 2021](#)).

The findings in the field, there is often a phenomenon that the local government is not successful in fulfilling the expectations of minority communities in their welfare. This condition further complicates the environment, society, culture, and economy. The impact is that the community lowers the level of public trust in the institution so that they do not care about the existence of new rules that are applied due to past disappointments. EJ must be able to become a bridge in this conflict with absolute conditions that must be implemented comprehensively so that the redefinition of EJ becomes their new hope for a more meaningful life ([Mohai & Bryant,](#)

[2020](#)).

The collaboration of regional heads in running EJ also needs to get active support from the younger generation. This generational action can be initiated early on, namely in elementary schools which will determine changes in the economic, social, and environmental balance with environmental campaigns that are disseminated to various media both online and non-online, especially in this millennial generation which is known for its active consumers in using information technology or the internet bombastically ([Mohai et al., 2020](#)).

The urgency of institutional configuration theory must be understood as a structure that can analyze local government governance within the framework of work construction that harmonizes environmental policy completion factors such as various increasingly complex combinations ([Luova, 2019](#)).

Differences in environmental attitudes and behavior in the community of children who attend sustainable schools are inversely proportional to the community of children who attend regular elementary schools. This is reflected in the evidence of changes in pro-environmental attitudes in children, which is evidence of the success of green schools. In contrast, students who attend conventional schools have minimal knowledge of protecting the environment, and they also seem to be more concerned with their individual needs than the opposite school. This is also in line with the findings at the Al Fajar school which provides environmental education regularly every week so that it provides a stimulus for students to become environmentally conscious. See in the table below,

Table 2 Implementation of Environmental Education Curriculum

Academic Years	Semesters	Theory	Theory Discussion	Score	Outdoor Learning
2019-2020	Odd Number	Biology	Biodiversity	70, 65, 80, 70, 75, 80, 85, 65, 70, 75, 80, 80, 75, 75, 80, 75, 70, 85, 69, 70.75, 80.90, 80, 75	Safari Parks and Botanical Garden
	Even Number		Ecology	80, 74, 76, 83, 75, 66, 68, 69, 78, 80, 78, 85, 88, 76, 72, 68, 64, 73, 71,	Visiting campus, community service, and social service
				Average : 75,8	

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84, 77, 80,

92, 79, 86

Average : 76,9

The process of implementing environmental education at the Al Fajar school is routinely held every four weeks in one month with a duration of 45 minutes per meeting item for each subject. Routine learning is carried out so that students understand more about the importance of protecting the natural environment. Based on the findings of the evaluation of learning outcomes on biodiversity material, an average value = 75.8 was obtained, while learning outcomes on ecology material obtained an average = 76.9. Referring to the learning outcomes, the average value is being able to achieve a good level of cumulative scores. The results of this study prove that students are serious about studying environmental knowledge in accordance with other formal subjects. These findings prove that learning activities at Al Fajar schools can broaden students' knowledge in solving environmental problems related to everyday life. Increased knowledge, changes in attitudes, and skills make students able to act wisely and have competence in interacting with the environment so that in the end there is a desire to act fairly in their environment. In addition to learning in class, learning is also given outside the classroom. Such as visiting parks and forests, social service work, sports activities in nature, and other activities in an effort to protect the environment. As a result, students' creativity becomes more developed with ideas for solving environmental problems actively and dynamically.



Figure 6 Al Fajar School Scout Youth Activities

Scouting activities are also being encouraged every week at the Al Fajar Islamic school making a positive contribution to the establishment of a scout club because it supports student independence in collaborating with nature as proof of loving nature and strengthening self-confidence in being responsible for the surroundings environment.



Figure 7 Al Fajar School Archery Activities

For this reason, environmental education is an important key in achieving sustainable development to create students who are environmentally literate so that they can turn into a community of people who are motivated to be environmentally aware and able to make the best decisions in overcoming conflicts that occur with civilized actions for the common good (Tucker & Izadpanahi, 2017).

This is in line with the findings of Al Fajar school teachers who provide psychology-based teaching that makes students the best partners so that they feel comfortable and satisfied with the recognition given by the teacher. The emotional closeness that occurs is in line with the concept of EJ, thus maximizing the green school's mission. An environmental justice approach that teaches us to learn to work together in the values of norms and ethics of goodness will further strengthen one's mission and vision in an effort to recognize togetherness to maintain unity from small community components, medium communities, to large communities that are in harmony with the earth and produce mutualistic relationships that are interrelated with each other like a flowing cycle regardless of the various differences they have. If this concept is continuously applied to green schools, it will further optimize its development for school progress which ends in the role of school success which will be useful for the country in the present and the future.

CONCLUSION

The role of environmental justice in strategic efforts to improve and develop green schools will determine the efficiency and effectiveness of school success. The behavior of students who have been successfully educated in implementing environmental justice with the paradigm of equality in managing nature by minimizing all kinds of adverse environmental impacts is the most important component of human survival itself. This is in line with the findings. The students of Al Fajar School will have a higher score because from the start they have been forged by the sad environmental and social conditions that have occurred. Thus, the value of their self-awareness is more easily affected because they already understand environmental conditions. The active role of the teachers at the Al Fajar school has proven to be successful in leading students to become wise and responsible individuals. The psychology-based approach to human relations taught by the teachers at the Al Fajar school has proven successful in making them become agents of change that support the creation of environmental conditions that benefit everyone while still

managing the environment in the best possible way without destroying their habitats. Receiving all kinds of input, relevant ideas, updates, and criticism from all parties involved is proof of active recognition to collaborate in accordance with EJ regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and others. This support will extend to the external scope of the school. As a result, schools here are not only a means of receiving and transferring knowledge but also function as a place for quality people to gather by interacting and exchanging creative ideas in determining the image of an effective green school. According to the findings at the Al Fajar school itself, learning is not only carried out in the classroom but outside the classroom, so that the learning process becomes attractive and dynamic. Students must be considered the best partners in the learning process, in line with the EJ concept of equality and recognition. Even though there will be many obstacles in the field that must be overcome, efforts and actions supported by a strong commitment from all stakeholders will maximize the opportunities that exist with the support of the formation of a balanced Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Thus, awareness of environmental issues should not be underestimated because when combined with green schools and EJ this can also be considered a successful weapon for the future in efforts to protect the environment for the younger generation and then for the country and society. in general. Then by developing and building these green schools with knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are based on environmental justice, it will increasingly create conditions for increased equality and recognition of opinions and presence to be valued in supporting the realization of effective and efficient green schools for the future.

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