

Sustainability from the Global South

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The global south is rich in sustainability lessons -

Educators must share how communities in the developing world manage environmental change — a Western bias limits progress, argues Harini Nagendra.

In a Bangalore slum, Dhanalakshmi tends six plant pots balanced on a wall. They contain shoots of holy basil (or tulasi, *Ocimum tenuiflorum*). I asked her why she does this, in a cramped space with an unreliable water supply. She told me that the plants replace her tiny roadside kitchen garden, which she lost when the street was widened. The wind blew the basil seeds into the pots. "How can one turn away a guest, even if they come uninvited?" she said. Dhanalakshmi's deep, personal connection to nature shapes her actions, even though she lives far from the countryside. Such attachments are shared by many people around the world. They run through centuries of Indian thinking on sustainability: nature offers material benefits; it is part of people's cultural identities and often viewed as sacred. Protecting nature also confers social merit. A stone inscription from AD 1350 describes the motivation of Chennaya Nayaka, the ruler of a region near Bangalore, for building an irrigation tank: 'to support animals, cattle, birds, and all other living beings, and the service at all times of (the goddess of water) Ganga Devi'(1).

Please read the entire article [The Global South is Rich in Sustainability Lessons](#)

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